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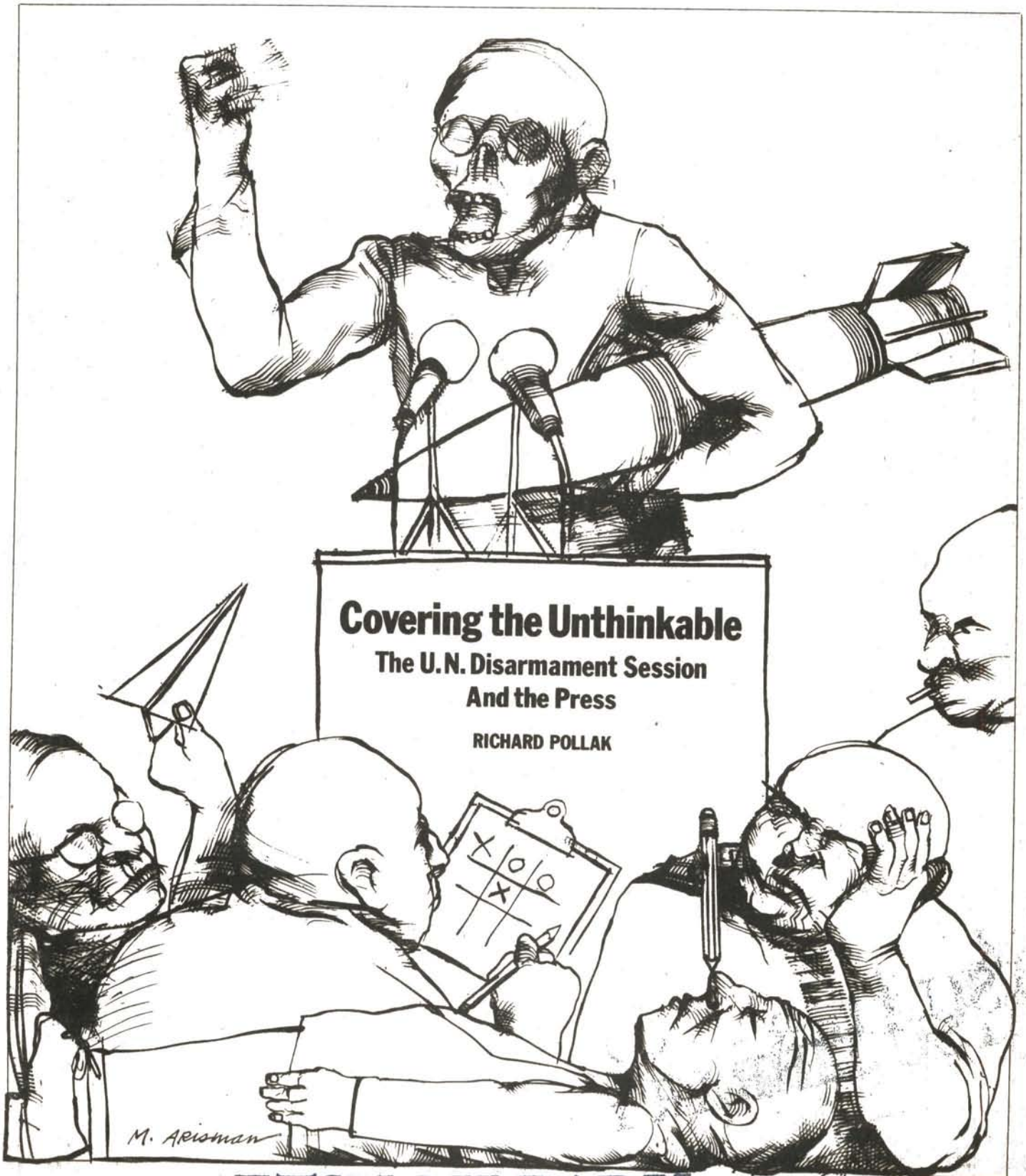

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EXCHANGE.

The Salvadoran Elections

Washington, D.C.

I must take strong exception to the editorial by Morris Blachman and Kenneth Sharpe in *The Nation* ["Salvador's Vote," April 3] and can only imagine that their erroneous interpretation of the elections in El Salvador stems from inaccurate facts.

Blachman and Sharpe argue that no opposition leader could ask his followers to sign registration petitions that "would most likely end up being death lists." In fact, neither Guillermo Ungo's M.N.R. nor the Communist Party's electoral vehicle, the U.D.N., had to register anew, but only inform the Elections Commission that their party statutes were still valid and that they wished to participate in the elections.

Blachman and Sharpe state that conditions in El Salvador were not adequate for elections. We agree that conditions were far from ideal. But there is precedent for holding elections in the midst of armed conflicts—Venezuela in the 1960s, or even the United States in 1864. In El Salvador, moreover, the Elections Commission last November invited the M.N.R. and U.D.N. to discuss the election law and conditions for elections. The F.M.L.N.'s response was to step up the violence in a desperate attempt to prevent the elections. They threatened voters and attacked and bombed buses, bridges, towns, polling places and the Elections Commission headquarters up to and including election day. Ungo's statement from outside the country that no special actions would be taken to disrupt the elections proved no more meaningful than his ability to prevent the E.R.P.'s seizure of towns on October 16, 1979, while Ungo was serving on the first post-revolution junta. E.R.P. leader Joaquin Villalobos stated later that the seizure had been necessary to accelerate the crisis of the first junta (*Dissent*, Winter 1982).

The unprecedented turnout of 1.5 million voters demonstrated the ordinary people's rejection of the guerrillas' threats and violence. Hundreds of international observers from more than forty countries verified the popular enthusiasm for El Salvador's first free and fair elections in fifty years. They also witnessed the honesty and openness of the election process, free from official coercion or intimidation. Eight of every nine voters opted for one of the six parties that competed in the elections. So unless we believe that a Marxist "vanguard" in El Salvador has the right to arbitrarily speak on behalf of the Salvadoran "people," or unless we believe that *The Nation*'s correspondents know better than the Salvadoran people, we cannot ignore the results of the March 28 elections. I am dismayed by the vehement determination of Blachman and Sharpe to dismiss the votes of so many Salvadorans as a farce. They are willing, on the other hand, to accept the F.M.L.N./F.D.R.'s claim to speak for the people—a claim the F.M.L.N./F.D.R. says it is willing to test, not in open elections but only in a plebiscite to ratify the power-sharing arrangement it proposes to achieve through "negotiations."

Elections will by no means resolve all of El Salvador's problems, but, as the country's Catholic bishops said before the event, they are an enormous first step toward the creation of a peaceful political process. Let us hope that all political parties and groups will join the next phase of that process and participate in the next elections.

Everett E. Briggs
Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs and Member of U.S. Election Observer Delegation

BLACHMAN AND SHARPE REPLY

Columbia, S.C.; Swarthmore, Pa.

We welcome Everett Briggs's response to our article—it is rare that the State Department issues any such public defense of its policies—and hope it will be the opening of a serious dialogue on this issue. Briggs begins the argument by accusing us of misinterpreting the elections and suggesting that our analysis was based on "inaccurate facts." Our article argued that the elections would be a step backward, not forward, in the effort to encourage democracy and discourage violence in El Salvador. We argued that a precondition to "free and fair elections" was a society where a wide range of views and programs could be articulated without fear of intimidation or violence.

Briggs, however, asserts that the "election process [was conducted with] honesty and openness [and was] free from official coercion or intimidation." But he misevaluates the electoral *process* by limiting himself to the casting and counting of ballots; he fails to look beyond that to the choices and conditions that make an electoral process more or less democratic.

What are the relevant "facts" about El Salvador needed to assess our two differing interpretations? Historical evidence clearly shows that the crises that led to the dissolution of the first and second juntas (with the massive resignations of civilian moderates, including many Christian Democrats) were caused by the inability of the moderates to tame the repression of the hard-liners in the military and the paramilitary forces. It was the military, now supported with aid from the Reagan Administration, that controlled the third junta Duarte came to preside over at about the same time as the last moderate military officer, Colonel Majano, was ousted. Important sectors of the army and the treasury police were actively engaged in premeditated repression, torture and massacre, and no serious efforts were made to control the death squads in their campaign of terror.

Freedom of the press, speech and association have been severely restricted by fear of military or paramilitary reprisal. Few of those who ran in the elections were able to campaign on the most important issue: reforming and restructuring the military and eliminating the death squads. They could not have done so and lived. In fact, not only was Duarte himself unable to control the terror aimed at members of his own party by these forces, he was unable even to campaign freely, and was forced to rely on television.

What's more, those who might have supported other center-left candidates would have risked attack and death for their positions during the campaign. Ungo may have been able to run without getting new signatures, but even Briggs does not challenge our point about the dangers to any signers of petitions for new center-left parties like the F.D.R. These petitions would have been potential death lists. To imply that opposition to the elections necessarily translates into being antidemocratic would be as misleading as arguing that Roberto d'Aubuisson's participation evidenced his respect for democracy. Despite the lack of "official coercion and intimidation" observed at the polls, the election process was neither "free" nor "fair."

Let us be realistic. As long as the repressive character of this U.S.-supported regime continues, opposition will grow and elections will not be a mechanism for including the very groups whose participation is essential for a just and lasting settlement.

Although no intimidation or ballot-stuffing was reported by official international observers, one cannot conclude that the turnout was a "voluntary display of popular enthusiasm" for the elections nor simply a rejection of the opposition. For example, voting was mandatory. Each voter's identity card was marked at the polls, and failure to show this mark on demand could have serious consequences. In a situation where the violence of the left was dwarfed by the massive repression of the military forces and the death squads, it would have been sensible to have heeded the words of the junta that abstention was a vote for the guerrillas. Nonvoting would clearly have marked a person as an F.D.R./F.M.L.N. sympathizer in the military's eyes. Given the repressive character of the regime, there was no need to engage in specific acts of intimidation to get people to vote. Additionally, peasants in rural areas, who for years have voted as their patrons have advised,

(*Continued on Page 528*)

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CONTENTS.

Volume 234, Number 17

EXCHANGE
512

EDITORIALS
513 Survival Politics
514 Rx for Doomsday — *Ring Lardner Jr.*
514 *Oedipus* Complex
515 Deathly Silence — *I. F. Stone*

ARTICLES
516 Covering the Unthinkable: The U.N. Disarmament Session And the Press — *Richard Pollak*
523 How the Freeze Campaign Was Born — *Michael Kazin*
525 A Directory of Antinuclear Groups — *David Corn*

BOOKS & THE ARTS
529 "Invisible Man" at Thirty — *Alice K. Turner*
529 Schell: The Fate of the Earth — *Neil Schmitz*
531 Bayley: Joe McCarthy and the Press — *James Aronson*
533 Abbey: Down the River — *Dennis Drabelle*
535 Conlin, ed.: At the Point of Production: The Local History of the I.W.W.
Foner, ed.: Fellow Workers and Friends: I.W.W. Free-Speech Fights as Told by Participants — *Frank Donner*
536 Films — *Robert Hatch*
537 Theater — *Richard Gilman*

Drawings by Marshall Arisman

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EDITORIALS.

Survival Politics

It is beginning to happen. Across the land, from the town halls of New England to the union halls of California, a citizens' movement for nuclear disarmament is beginning to take shape. We welcome it as we have welcomed little else in our long history, and this issue is to celebrate, inform and guide it.

A little more than a year ago in these pages, E. P. Thompson cautiously called for "a politics of survival" to face down the satanic generals ["A Letter to America," *The Nation*, January 24, 1981], "a politics which commences, not at the top with diplomats and abortive SALT negotiations but with popular movements and with scores of less formal lateral exchanges." That politics, we are glad to say, is now shaking itself into being, gathering strength quite across the ideological spectrum, and asserting itself most particularly with the nuclear freeze campaign and the upcoming rally at the U.N. disarmament session this June.

Some have greeted this burgeoning movement hesitantly, even hostilely. President Reagan, with masterful doublespeak, says he "welcomes" the citizens' "concern"—*concern*? it is more like anguish, or terror—and says it proves that we now have "to modernize our defense." More openly, William G. Hyland, who was Kissinger's right-hand hatchet man in the National Security Council, confesses that he's "kind of appalled at the popularization of these subjects" like war and peace and survival. "I don't like the idea," he says, "of a lot of people screaming and yelling that these warmongers in Washington need to be brought under control."

Naturally the warmongers and their allies fear what Samuel Huntington described for the Trilateral Commission a few years ago as "an excess of democracy." It makes things difficult for them. But if this antinuclear movement

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represents an excess, we would argue that there are some things, like democracy, and peace itself, you cannot have too much of.

The other day we received a telephone call from a subscriber, a poet, who wanted to share with us his idea. "I just thought to myself," he said, "what could I do as a poet to contribute to the nuclear freeze movement, and came up with the idea of reading my poetry on the subject in public places, like bookstores. I sent out 800 leaflets suggesting the idea to my friends."

One person's act. But there are many like him who now are acting. And when citizens act, governments had best listen.

Rx for Doomsday

It is easy to get the impression from what you read these days that we will all be helpless if a nuclear war breaks out. Fallout shelters are useless; evacuation plans are self-defeating. Do we then have no option once war has begun except to launch our own missiles and make sure the enemy is destroyed as totally as we are? Is there anything individual Americans can do but wait passively for the blast that will obliterate us and our civilization?

Of course there is. We can take steps now to avoid all the agony, or at the very least to minimize our personal suffering, by getting as close as we can to the center of our nearest major target area. There is overwhelming evidence, in the specifics of destruction as Jonathan Schell portrays them in *The Fate of the Earth*, that people within a few miles of ground zero will be quite unaware of what hit them.

In a moderate attack, involving only a few hundred of the 10,000 megatons or so in the stockpile of each of the superpowers, the 60 percent of the people who live in our densest 18,000 square miles would be killed by various short-term effects. If one twenty-megaton bomb were exploded 30,000 feet above the Empire State Building, Schell says, "New York City and its suburbs would be transformed into a lifeless, flat, scorched desert in a few seconds."

Exploded on the ground, the same bomb would create a fireball six miles in diameter and convert all the people in that area into part of the mushroom cloud. As particles, now lethally radioactive, they would sprinkle down on their fellow Americans in the surrounding region, and another 15 to 20 million would die more slowly and much more painfully, for a total wipeout of 10 percent of the U.S. population. Proportionate extermination would occur in target areas throughout the country.

In those statistics rests the essential truth about nuclear annihilation. People in cities and close to them will be extinguished so quickly they won't know what's happened to them. Those killed in the suburbs by fire and close-range fallout will suffer acutely but for fairly short periods of time. Farther out, burns and cancers will keep their victims in severe pain for hours, days, weeks, even months. The collapse of our transportation and supply systems will cause others to starve or freeze to death, and epidemics from millions of rotting corpses and shattered sewage systems will eliminate millions more. The blind, the disfigured, the maimed and those experiencing the extended agony of radiation sickness will go to their slow deaths without any kind of professional care, nursing or medication.

There may be a handful of people who have managed to get far enough underground and survived there long enough to escape the fallout from the bombs themselves. They will emerge months later to face the stronger, far more persistent radiation from the exploding of a set of targets no enemy could resist: our own conveniently located nuclear power plants. If a one-megaton bomb were dropped on just one of those seventy-six installations, the spent and unspent fuel could fatally contaminate 1,700 square miles for a whole year.

Why would any reasonable man or woman want to remain in those zones of terror and endure excruciating tortures on the protracted road to a miserable death? Why should anyone pay the price for staying outside the main target cities once an enemy attack is inevitable?

As soon as we know the bombs are coming, the closer we can get to a sure target, the better chance we have to escape the worst effects. Every person, every community, every branch of government, local, state and Federal, should agree now on an emergency plan for a national convergence—a mass movement toward our major metropolitan centers the moment the holocaust alarm is sounded. People already there would be urged to move inside the buildings and leave the streets free for the incoming throngs.

If you make preparations now for a car pool, a special train or bus, or for just running if you're not too far away—remember, the closer you end up the better, even if you don't make it all the way—you can meet nuclear disaster head-on. If you get near enough, you won't even notice it.

RING LARDNER JR.

Ring Lardner Jr., who announced his retirement from screenwriting last year in The Nation, *is currently working on a novel.*

Oedipus Complex

The cancellation of a scheduled performance of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* narrated by Vanessa Redgrave was made with "reluctance," according to a spokesman for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. No doubt. We imagine that many of those associated with that splendid institution—which now looks a little less splendid—must be embarrassed by the entire episode.

For now, management is declining to comment further. That is a shame. It would be useful to know just why the Boston Symphony cancelled Redgrave's performance. Did musicians refuse to perform? Did subscribers cancel? Did patrons threaten to withhold contributions? Did public officials apply pressure? Did anyone threaten violence? Who—or what—made the management do something that it says it did reluctantly?

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Those who dislike Redgrave's politics have every right, of course, to express their views. They are also entitled to withhold their support from the orchestra in protest, though we deplore the use of this tactic against an artist's political positions. We would like to think that the Boston Symphony would not bow to such pressure.

In bowing, the organization politicizes itself and dishonors its tradition of artistic integrity. It should have insisted that the political views of an artist have no bearing on a performance. And, having made its wrong decision, it should at the very least tell us what pressures were exerted on it and what price it would have had to pay if the performance had gone ahead.

Blacklisting will not necessarily be prevented by using the disinfectant of sunlight. But if we know what is at stake, we can more effectively combat it.

Deathly Silence

Washington, April 21

After a lifetime of journalism, I still do not understand the media. Specifically, I cannot fathom the pool of silence into which the killing of the four Dutch journalists in El Salvador has been dropped. Why is there so little capacity for caring?

The Dutch government has given its Parliament a preliminary report on its own investigation. But the only full account of that report was published in *The Washington Post* on April 15 in a dispatch from Marlise Simons, a special correspondent in Mexico City, where the Dutch ambassador is also the ambassador to El Salvador and has taken an active part in the investigation.

The New York Times buried the Dutch report the same day in a short and murky Reuters dispatch from The Hague, part of the daily "Around the World" miscellany used for stray foreign items. I would bet that few newspapers in the rest of the country carried even a paragraph about it.

The Dutch government's report seems to have been played down, perhaps for fear of rocking the boat in advance of Queen Beatrix's visit to Washington this week. The report was skeptical of the Salvadoran government's claim that the Dutch journalists were slain accidentally in a fight between government troops and guerrillas. This is the version the White House still supports.

Additional information, as important as the report itself, has come from an unnamed Dutch foreign ministry official who talked to Simons. He disclosed first that the Dutch investigators had seen the report made to the White House by the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador and termed it, succinctly, "not thorough." (The Senate and House Committees on Foreign Affairs ought to ask for a copy.) He also said that the U.S. Embassy refused to help when the Dutch investigators tried to question U.S. military advisers stationed in a barracks near the scene of the killings. Nor would the embassy cooperate when the Dutch tried to question members of the Salvadoran patrol who did the shooting.

Dutch Foreign Minister Max van der Stoel refused a chance to air these complaints to the world press here yesterday at an appearance with the Queen at a National Press Club luncheon. When he was asked about the slain journalists, he quickly brushed the issue aside. But I was told later by a friend who had just talked with the Netherlands that the Foreign Minister let it be known to the Dutch press that he had indeed raised questions privately with Under Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger during an official luncheon the day before and had asked the State Department for the help the U.S. Embassy had declined to give. The Dutch in their ongoing investigation still want to interrogate the Salvadoran soldiers who took part in the shootings and presumably also the U.S. military advisers. Eagleburger's response was not reported. You have to be pretty naïve to believe that the State Department will do more than cluck sympathetically. But it might help if the press turned its spotlight on this matter.

The Dutch government report cast doubt on the "accidental" death story by noting that only three weapons, two guns and a revolver, *and no spent cartridges*, were picked up by the Salvadoran soldiers. This has the look of an ambush rather than a battle and supports Raymond Bonner's suggestion in *The New York Times* (April 11) that the Dutch were trailed to the scene and murdered. That, I understand, is the view held generally by the press corps in El Salvador.

But there have been no editorial reactions in either *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* to their own revelations. Nor has there been any adequate organized reaction by journalists themselves, although Bonner reported that the murders have already had a chilling effect on press coverage in the country.

Thirty-five foreign journalists, mostly American, are on the right-wing "hit list" made public in San Salvador at the time the four Dutchmen were killed. If some of the others are killed next, part of the blame will rest on those whose silence encourages the Salvadoran rightists to believe that journalists—like nuns and U.S. land reformers and the Archbishop—can be killed there with impunity.

Blood will also spatter on Ronald Reagan. Within forty-eight hours of the Dutch killings he applied the whitewash by saying cutely that the U.S. government had no information "to contradict" the official Salvadoran story that the Dutch died accidentally. (Nobody asked whether, on the other hand, he had anything to confirm it.) This was instant cooperation in a cover-up. It gave what the "hit squads" could easily interpret as a wink.

I. F. STONE

NEOCONSERVATIVE JEWS

In next week's issue, Earl Shorris examines the striking number of Jews who are among the leaders of the current neoconservative movement and explores the contradiction between traditional Jewish liberalism and these new apostates, "set adrift . . . without ethics, culture or history." If a Jew abandons mercy, he asks, "is he still a Jew?" Shorris, a novelist and journalist, is the author of *Under the Fifth Sun*, *The Death of the Great Spirit* and, most recently, *The Oppressed Middle.*

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ARTICLES.

Covering the Unthinkable

The U.N. Disarmament Session and the Press

RICHARD POLLAK

On June 7, the United Nations will begin a special session on disarmament. That it is the second such conclave may come as a surprise to even the most ardent and committed seekers of peace, for the first session was among the best-kept secrets of 1978. That year, some twenty heads of state or government spoke at the five-week gathering of the General Assembly, among them President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of France, Prime Minister Thorbjorn Falldin of Sweden, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau of Canada and Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany. Vice President Walter Mondale headed the U.S. delegation, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko the Soviet team. Representatives from more than 200 nongovernmental organizations participated, including 500 Japanese, some of them atomic bomb survivors. It was, in Secretary General Kurt Waldheim's words, "the largest and most representative gathering ever convened to consider the question of disarmament." Yet most news organizations in the United States dismissed the session with a handful of routine stories or ignored it altogether.

The nuclear time bomb has ticked louder and louder in the last four years, and the cry against the arms race now swelling in the United States and Europe has forced the media to take note. But for all the increased reporting in recent months, news organizations still give the possibility of nuclear annihilation far less coverage than gastronomic matters and far less systematic attention than the television listings. This absurd sense of priorities is unlikely to change significantly in time for the June disarmament session unless reporters and editors move swiftly to examine the fundamental attitudes that have crimped their coverage of disarmament for years.

To most reporters, for example, the 1978 session was a failure. At the meeting's end no one stepped forward at a news conference and held up a plowshare for a "photo opportunity." Never mind that the conference had finally taken place after seventeen years of talk about it, that China participated in disarmament talks for the first time and that men and women from all over the world grappled with the most critical issue of our time. Certainly it was news that the session received a petition calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons signed by more than 20 million Japanese; and that Trudeau announced that Canada would never build a nuclear arsenal; and that France introduced a proposal for setting up an international satellite-monitoring agency as an essential adjunct to disarmament agreements. Yet these developments and dozens more simply put a glaze over most journalists' eyes.

The session's 129-paragraph "Final Document" was generally ignored, too, though its call for renewed efforts to end the arms race was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly. The document also announced the establishment of a revitalized Disarmament Commission in New York, composed of all member states of the United Nations, and called attention to more than thirty proposals that had been put forward during the special session. These ranged from a West German working paper on seismological verification of nuclear explosions to a call by the nonaligned nations for the dismantling of foreign military bases and the withdrawal of troops from foreign territories. "The General Assembly is convinced," the summary concluded, "that the discussions of the disarmament problems at the special session and [this] Final Document will attract the attention of all peoples, further mobilize world public opinion and provide a powerful impetus for the cause of disarmament." Alas, let us count the ways.

Covering the Coverage

I have not read every scrap of the coverage of the 1978 session, but I have read enough to bestow upon *The Wall Street Journal* top honors for dismissing the story. On May 24, our business daily—with the second largest circulation (1.5 million) of any newspaper in the land—noted the opening of the session with two paragraphs in its page 1 roundup. By the time the meeting concluded at the end of June *The Journal* had not found room for an additional peep on the subject. Even the eighteenth-century gunnery officers on the editorial deck did not bother lobbing a cannonball at the conference.

On the other hand, the best the modern thinkers at *The Washington Post* could do was an opening-day editorial on May 23 that read in part:

> True, fantastic sums—$400 billion a year world-wide by one count—are spent on defense; and it is tempting to contemplate what could be done if those resources were diverted to civilian needs. Yet though the "arms race" does waste

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Richard Pollak, former literary editor of The Nation, *was the founding editor of* MORE, *the journalism review that was published in the 1970s. He is the author of* Up Against Apartheid: The Role and the Plight of the Press in South Africa *(Southern Illinois University Press). This article was adapted from a pamphlet that will be published by The Nation Institute.*

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resources and retard economic and social growth and nourish aggressive ambitions, it also provides security and self-confidence and allows aggrieved parties to right wrongs and in some respects help maintain peace. It does no harm to talk straight about these things.

Talking straight the next day, Milton R. Benjamin, *The Post*'s man at the United Nations, began his dispatch: "In a subdued manner befitting the near-hopelessness of the task, the U.N. General Assembly opened a special session on disarmament yesterday . . ." Benjamin stayed on the case for three more days, reporting primarily on the speeches of Mondale, Giscard d'Estaing and Gromyko. That was all until July 1, when *The Post* ran twelve paragraphs of wire service copy wrapping up the special session.

Some major dailies around the country ran a few more stories than *The Post*, but their reporting was equally routine. Nor did their editorials seem to regard disarmament as a matter of any particular urgency. *The Chicago Tribune*, for example, stifled a yawn on May 24: "Even though these 'minor' big league arms talks may not solve any important disarmament puzzles, they may at least throw a stronger light into areas where light is needed."

The Los Angeles Times gave the session eight perfunctory stories, six of them during the ballyhoo of the first week, when most of the diplomatic heavy-hitters held forth. As the session ended, the paper reported (June 29) that U.N. bureaucrats had taken over the General Assembly hall to demand more pay, pushing the disarmament talks into the basement. Neither this sorry spectacle nor anything else that happened over the preceding five weeks moved *The Times* to editorial comment. On June 18, however, the paper did provide space on its Opinion page for Harold Willens, a businessman then widely known for his opposition to the Vietnam War, to lament that reporters and editors "in all branches of journalism . . . have failed abysmally to help the American people understand that ever-expanding nuclear arsenals are not the same thing as national security." Willens, in fact, appears to have been a sop to peaceniks on both coasts. A week earlier (June 11), he made the same point about the media on the Op-Ed page of *The New York Times*: "You can report events like the Vietnam War and Watergate, but you cannot report the end of history. We can only prevent it."

Nothing in *The New York Times*'s coverage of the special session suggests that it recognized or even understood the distinction. It devoted more space to the meeting than any other paper I read, some two dozen articles from May 23 through July 1—it was, after all, a hometown story. But none of them strained to rise above the ordinary to suggest that Willens might be on to something. Nor did the editorial page take up his challenge or bother with any of the tiresome issues that were being discussed across town. Instead, the paper spent much of its passion and insight on the arrival of casino gambling in Atlantic City. The two dozen entries on the U.N. gathering take up three and a half inches in *The New York Times Index 1978*; the New Jersey gambling entries for the same five-week span fill fourteen inches.

Even *The Christian Science Monitor* gave the disarmament session only eight articles, all of them pedestrian at best. The paper's editorial page, however, recognized the crisis for what it is. "The superpowers seek merely to slow down the world's arms vehicle," it pointed out May 26, ". . . but the stubborn fact is that the vehicle is careening out of control. When will the nations squarely face this fact?" At the meeting's end, *The Monitor* observed (July 3) that "it did manage to advance the cause of disarmament a step or two." No other daily that I saw seemed to think it worth noting editorially that China had participated in the talks for the first time or that, as a result of the session, France had agreed to end its boycott of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva.

At least some major dailies gave the special session passing coverage. Large-circulation magazines virtually ignored it. The *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* (March 1978 to February 1979) lists only thirty entries on the conference, eight of them from the *United Nations Chronicle* itself. Nineteen pieces appeared in the predictable places: *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (5), *The Nation* (4), *Department of State Bulletin* (3), *America* (2), *National Review* (2), *The Progressive* (2), *The Christian Century* (1). Only three articles were printed in publications that might conceivably alter the minds of the unconverted: *Aviation Week* (May 22), which registered nervousness over the session's opposition to arms sales; *U.S. News & World Report* (July 10), which interviewed the indefatigable Willens; and *Time* (June 5), which devoted a full page to the first week of the session.

Time's general tone was set in the first sentence, which reported that the delegates "pulled up to the United Nations' glassy headquarters by the limousine load." Further on, the article recorded that General Assembly President

DRAWINGS BY MARSHALL ARISMAN

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Lazar Mojsov of Yugoslavia had castigated the United States and the Soviet Union as the "chief actors" in the arms race and urged that the monstrous sums spent on weapons be channeled into alleviating poverty and exploring new sources of energy. *Time* immediately put this plea into perspective: "To expect any such sweeping progress toward the centuries-old goal of disarmament was obviously unrealistic."

Discovering No Coverage

What was "realistic," apparently, was to report on the world as if no real threat existed to *Time*'s 20.7 million readers or the millions more whose ostrich mind-set was daily buried deeper by the media. For whatever its shortcomings, coverage of the 1978 U.N. special session on disarmament was then actually something of a high point. Once the conference ended and the delegates departed, the journalists packed up their modest concern about nuclear escalation and returned almost full time to politics as usual.

Page after page of the *Readers' Guide* and the various newspaper indexes demonstrate this with depressing consistency. *The Wall Street Journal Index* for 1978 offers more than a column of entries under "Disarmament." Almost all deal with the saber rattling of the superpowers, but at least the category existed. It disappeared entirely for the years 1979 and 1980. As for "Peace," *The Journal*'s indexes for all three years give us to understand that it is a subject of no interest to businessmen, despite the fact that even they would not profit from a nuclear holocaust. *The Journal* appears to regard its readers as totally committed Undershafts; look up "Weapons" in the index and you are advised to see "Munitions."

The Washington Post, our beacon in the capital of the free world, was little more worried than *The Journal* or most other papers. Its index for 1980, for example, reveals a total of five entries under "Peace"—two opinion columns and three stories about Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel. Look under "Peace Movement" and you are guided to "Pacifism," where there are eight entries. Only three of them are news stories, none of which deal broadly with the nuclear peril. Of course, scores more entries appear under such headings as "Nuclear Energy" or "Arms Control"—but that's just the point. The notion of arms control accepts nuclear weapons as a given. It implies that they should be limited and policed, not abolished, and that our deterrence policy, which rests on the balance of terror, somehow promotes national security.

This grotesque notion has been discredited again and again in the years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But no amount of logic seems able to discourage the mainstream press and broadcast outlets from perceiving deterrence strategy as the only framework within which to report and discuss the arms race. This is largely a function of power, the proximity to which most journalists are eager to achieve. The United States and Russia have the missiles and the clout; the superpowers set the agenda for discussion and debate on "arms control" and the boys on the bus follow slavishly along. The media gave tepid coverage to the 1978 disarmament session in part because neither Jimmy Carter nor Leonid Brezhnev attended.

No major news organization in this country has made peace and disarmament a regular beat, and as far as I know no journalist is assigned full time to reporting on the fact that the ultimate deadline is upon us all. (I would rejoice if proved wrong; meanwhile, I will console myself with the knowledge that *The New York Times* maintains a sports staff of thirty editors and reporters.) Rather than make peace a subject of sustained concern, the media boast a cadre of hard-nosed defense specialists and military affairs correspondents who assiduously record the endless stream of official pronouncements that passes for thoughtful discussion of the nuclear arms race and other "defense" matters. And make no mistake, these stalwarts know the territory. Leslie H. Gelb served in the Defense Department from 1967 to 1969; he was a reporter in the *New York Times* Washington bureau from 1973 to 1977; then he became director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs at the State Department until 1979. In January 1981, Richard Burt left as *The Times*'s national security correspondent and took over Gelb's old post at the State Department; four months later, Gelb replaced Burt at *The Times*. On April 5, *The Times* reported Burt's concern that "this country's ability to deter a Soviet attack was not as strong as necessary." *The Times*'s ability to deter incest may need some beefing up, too.

Covering War, Not Peace

Today more than fifty U.S. journalists regularly cover the Pentagon. Their dean is Drew Middleton, who, as even the most casual reader of *The Times* knows, travels the world in full battle dress wringing his typewriter over our lack of military preparedness. He has been *The Times*'s military affairs correspondent since 1970, but he has been reporting on wars since 1939, when he covered the British Expeditionary Force in France and Belgium. He is the recipient of the U.S. Navy Certificate of Merit, the U.S. Medal of Freedom and the Order of the British Empire (Military Division). His dozen books deal almost exclusively with military subjects and include such titles as *Retreat From Victory* and *Can America Win The Next War?*

Middleton is an information officer's dream. He arrives, steno pad at the ready, impatient to record the Gospel According to Mars. Last November 29, for example, he stoutly defended his uniformed buddies against the assaults of James Fallows (in his book, *National Defense*) and others who maintain that weapons have grown too complex and expensive "to be useful in warfare or credible for deterrent purposes." Middleton countered that in "more than a dozen interviews . . . no military officer or official expressed doubt that soldiers, sailors and airmen could use the new weapons." To rebut the carefully documented indictments of Fallows and colleagues, Middleton simply hung out a strand of self-serving assertions by the brass. This apologia, which opened on page 1 and ran a total of sixty-three column inches (including charts), concluded with the following assurance:

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> Predictions that tomorrow's soldier, sailor or airman will be unable to maintain computerized weapons may overlook an emerging trend, several sources said. This is the widespread popularity of computers and computerized games.
>
> "You've got high school boys doing computer programming," said General Anson, "and you've got kids jamming amusement arcades to play complicated computerized games. It's not going to be so difficult for them to handle the new machines as many think."

Middleton appears to lead a charmed life at *The Times*. Certainly no editor seems to care that many of his pieces are awash in blind sources, anonymous quotes and other legerdemain of the flacking journalist. In "Vietnam and the Military Mind," an article he wrote this year for *The New York Times Magazine*, I counted twelve quotations, not one of which was attributed to its speaker by name. (In fairness, I duly record that Middleton approvingly quoted the dictum "Duty, Honor, Country" and disclosed that it was spoken by Gen. Douglas MacArthur at West Point.) A *Times* reporter who returned from a peace rally with a notebook full of such evasions as "one antiwar activist said" would be busted, if not discharged. Yet Middleton marches on.

In The Week in Review of July 26, 1981, *The Times* attempted a full-fledged seminar on the "broad strategic and foreign policy questions the B-1 and MX questions raise." The interrogators in this exercise were switch-hitter Gelb; Caroline Rand Herron, an editor of The Review; and Judith Miller, a member of the *Times* Washington bureau. Allegedly on the griddle were John Steinbruner, director of foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution; Walter B. Slocombe, deputy to the undersecretary of defense for policy studies in the Carter Administration; and Seymour Weiss, an adviser to the Reagan Administration on national security matters and director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs in Nixon's State Department.

The give-and-take among these six filled an entire page of The Review, minus room for mug shots of the three "experts" and an enormous picture of a Minuteman warhead poking menacingly out of its silo. The discussion had all the insight and urgency of a meeting of hardware salesmen examining the merits of a new chain saw. "Realistically," said Steinbruner at one point, preambling forth with the father-knows-best adverb that warriors love most, "the MX missile itself is too far along in its development cycle and too ingrained in our feelings of imbalance. Some deployment is politically inevitable." No *Times* representative at the table apparently thought this assertion worth challenging. This, of course, is known as objective journalism: record what well-informed officials have to say and the truth will out.

Peace advocates doubtless can sound pontifical, too. But over the years, their views have rarely been sought out by the media, much less given a full page in The Week in Review. Gripped in the vise of tradition, reporters generally wait for something to happen or Someone Important to say something. *The Readers' Guide* indexes 179 magazines, including all of the leading national ones. In the year ending February 1981 these periodicals produced a mere twenty entries under "Anti-nuclear movement," and only two of them were publications of wide circulation: *Time* reported on a physicians' campaign to ban the bomb (January 12, 1981), and *Newsweek* covered a referendum against plans to deploy nuclear-tipped cruise missiles in Thetford, England (June 16, 1980). There were forty-four entries under "Atomic weapons and disarmament." In this category, no large-circulation publication gave voice to the disarmament cause—save the *Saturday Review* of March 15, 1980, in which Norman Cousins decried the nuclear buildup, as he has consistently since Hiroshima.

Even Adm. Hyman G. Rickover has lost his longstanding status as good copy now that he's been kicked into retirement by the Reagan Administration. Most of the media gave his January 28 appearance before the Joint Economic Committee of Congress the shortest of shrift. The next day, *The Washington Post* trivialized his testimony with the headline: "Bowing Out With a Blast/Human Race Will Probably Nuke Itself, Rickover Warns." The piece that followed labeled Rickover a "cage rattler" and left the impression we were hearing the last hurrah from a crotchety old sailor who refused to fade away. At least *The Post* put the story on page 1; *The New York Times* buried it on page 17 (January 29) under a headline advising us that here was Rickover's "Swan Song."

Despite the fact that Rickover told Congress he would sink all the nuclear submarines he helped create and that he would outlaw nuclear weapons and reactors, neither *The Times* nor *The Post* felt his thoughts rated editorial comment. In his opening statement, Rickover excoriated the greed and fraud in the defense industry and, in an exchange with Representative Henry Reuss, suggested that serious consideration should be given to nationalizing it along the lines of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Ho-hum. More im-

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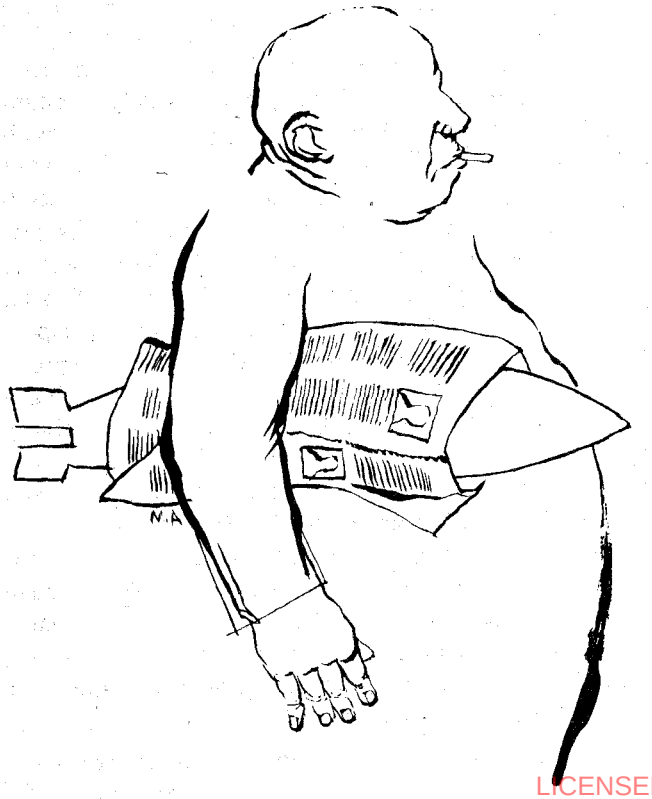
portant to *The Post* on the day after its coverage of Rickover's remarks was a lament about the tragic passing of the Philadelphia *Bulletin*. In subsequent days, neither paper bothered to excerpt a line of Rickover's testimony. That service was ultimately performed by *The New York Review of Books* (circulation 120,000), which gave more than two and a half pages to the matter in its March 18 issue.

Putting It on the Tube

Most broadcast journalists can't get out of bed without print crutches, so it was not surprising to find the electronic media's disarmament record far worse than that of newspapers and magazines. One notable exception was *CBS Reports*' "The Defense of the United States," which aired in June 1981. This series of five hour-long programs not only attacked many of our defense policies but stayed reasonably clear of the cold-war rhetoric that still afflicts so much American journalism. Reporting from Moscow, Walter Cronkite made no apologies for Soviet behavior on the world stage, but he and other CBS correspondents also made it plain that the Russian people and leadership had legitimate reasons to fear the West, not least because most often in the last thirty-five years it has been the United States that upped the ante in the arms race. Cronkite concluded:

> You can get yourself pretty frightened looking at all of the Administration's maps and charts of Soviet aggression and military spending. But like so many of our perceptions of the Soviet Union, it tells you only half the story, the half the Administration uses to press its case for higher and higher defense budgets.
>
> This is the other half of the story. Since 1960, Soviet influence around the world actually has declined. Their so-called gains, like Afghanistan and Angola, take on a different perspective, particularly when they're measured against losses, like Egypt and China. As for the military spending, the figures also are misleading. Our two systems, our two economies, are so different that to compare the costs of tanks and rocket launchers is just about as meaningful as comparing the costs of a college education.
>
> So we're back to our original questions: Who are these Russians? What are their intentions? No one can say with certainty. But if their perception of America is as flawed as we believe it is, then our perceptions of the Soviet Union just could be flawed, too. In the absence of any real dialogue, the same old fears and doubts continue to dominate our relations.



In "Ground Zero," the opening hour of the series, Dan Rather left no doubt where this lack of real dialogue was leading us. In graphic and chilling detail, he showed what would happen if a fifteen-megaton bomb, a thousand times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb, exploded on Omaha, Nebraska, home of the Strategic Air Command. It would result, said Rather, "in approximately 130,000 deaths by fire, a million and a half deaths from radiation sickness. Total dead: over 2 million in six weeks' time." Such catastrophes might be multiplied fifty, a hundred, a thousand times over. In talking with Rather, Dr. Kosta Tsipsis, associate director of the department of physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, put it this way: "In the history of mankind, we've always thought in terms of killing the enemy so we can survive. . . . That is not true anymore. If you attempt to kill your enemy by nuclear weapon, you will also die. . . . For the first time you cannot insure your own survival by killing the enemy."

In short, as Jonathan Schell writes in his just-published book, *The Fate of the Earth*, "nuclear war" is an utter misnomer, since a given condition of war is that eventually one side will emerge victorious. "There is thus," Schell continues, "no need to abolish war among the nuclear powers; it is already gone. The choices . . . consist now of peace, on the one hand, and annihilation, on the other."

Thinking the Unthinkable

The Schell essay, which first appeared in *The New Yorker* (February 1, 8 and 15), is especially important, not least for the reaction it has caused. It pulls together the scientific, medical, military, political and philosophical aspects of the nuclear peril and lays them out for us with a terrifying coherence. Thomas Collins, who writes about the media for *Newsday*, observed on February 17 that "Schell has spent 10 years on a subject on which most of us have not spent 10 minutes. . . . Unlike the rest of us, he has confronted the problem unblinkingly and wants us to do the same."

No work in recent memory has touched such a nerve. Harrison Salisbury called it "the most important book of the decade. Perhaps of the century." Similar endorsements came from Walter Cronkite, James Reston, George McGovern, W. Averell Harriman, Jacobo Timerman, Bill Moyers, Studs Turkel, Eliot Fremont-Smith, Mary McGrory, Garry Wills, T.R.B. and dozens of others. Approving editorials appeared in such newspapers as the

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Missoulian in Montana (February 8), *The Columbus Dispatch* (February 15) and *The Record* in Bergen County (February 16). On Easter Sunday, Kai Erikson, editor of *The Yale Review* and a professor of sociology and American studies at Yale, wrote in *The New York Times Book Review* that Schell's book "accomplishes what no other work has managed to do in the 37 years of the nuclear age. It compels us—and compel *is* the right word—to confront head on the nuclear peril in which we all find ourselves."

Well, not everybody. To the macho men on the *Times* editorial page the real danger is Schell and his adherents. On March 16, *The Times* mentioned *The New Yorker* pieces in passing, getting the title wrong in a mealy-mouthed editorial on Reagan and the nuclear freeze ("Our deepest hunch is that there are no new grounds for alarm"). The day Erikson's review appeared, the paper launched a counter-force editorial that read, in part:

> Deterrence is immoral, contends Jonathan Schell in a touted tract, "The Fate of the Earth." Lending voice to a widening circle of concern, he thinks no conceivable value of civilization is worth defending by means that threaten an end of civilization. If deterrence fails, as he thinks it eventually will, there's no second chance for humanity.
>
> How much, for him, is enough? Mr. Schell can't be bothered with policy. Having confirmed, at numbing length, that nukes are dangerous, he airily departs for higher ground. The planet must be purged of nuclear weapons and the way to do that is to invent a higher allegiance than the war-making sovereign state. Let conflicts be settled without violence through global law—or dictatorship or religion—he's too worked up to dwell on details.
>
> But the rest of us are left in the real world, stuck with the only available alternative to catastrophe. Deterrence it will have to be. But how much is enough to deter?

"The rest of us"? "The real world"? "Only available alternative"? "Deterrence it will have to be"? Frankly, I'd rather be in Philadelphia.

More than any publications of mass circulation, *Time* and *Newsweek* have belatedly recognized the antinuclear movement, each with generally thoughtful cover stories in recent weeks. More telling than the content of either package, however, was a comment in the "Letter from the Publisher" by the man who edited *Time*'s version. "TIME's correspondents," said the magazine's national editor, John T. Elson, "turned up local initiatives all over the country. It is a populist, popular movement that has really sneaked up on us."

Like Vietnam. Like the environment. Like dozens of issues over the years that have caught the media napping. Journalists love to believe they operate on the cutting edge; more often they blunt history, rooted as they are in continuity and sameness. I don't minimize for a moment the excellent reporting on many fronts that gets done around the country; but most journalism, whatever its virtues, in the end provides a familiar and comforting security blanket we daily clutch to reassure ourselves about the status quo. Even now that it has begun to recognize the urgency of the story, conventional journalism is utterly incapable of dealing with the prospect of world suicide. Schell writes that we must "reinvent politics" if we are to save ourselves. The media require no less.

Retooling the Media

For minimum starters, no major newspaper, magazine, station or network should be without at least one reporter assigned full time to covering disarmament and the peace movement. Thanks largely to Schell's essay, and to grass-roots antinuclear activism and politicians' growing sensitivity to it, reporting on the subject has indisputably improved in recent months. But this ad hoc coverage does not begin to convey the urgency of the nuclear peril. On the contrary, the general run of routine pieces—on the Pope's concern, on antinuclear protests in Europe, on increasing alarm among religious groups, on the nuclear-freeze debate—leaves us with the impression that the growing prospect of nuclear holocaust is just one more story among many. Indeed, dozens of marginal events and escapades are given far greater stress, in the grand journalistic tradition of promoting the trivial. Take, for just one example, the Washington press corps' foaming pursuit last year of our now-departed national security adviser, Richard V. Allen, for misplacing a handful of yen.

The media must begin today to make it clear that the prospect of nuclear extinction is light-years more important than any other issue. Reports on the subject should be prominently featured on the nightly news and on page 1 *every day*. This really isn't so radical a proposal. Weather news has been given such display for years, presumably because a lot of people want to know if they should take their umbrellas to the office. It is a useful service, as are the stock quotations, baseball box scores, recipes, television listings and other features the media bring us with such determined efficiency day after day. But if we're all crisped in a missile exchange, it won't matter how many hits Pete Rose got yesterday or whether showers are expected tomorrow.

Like the stock market and sports results, the arms race and all its ramifications should be quantified daily. We cannot be reminded too often that 50,000 nuclear weapons with the equivalent explosive power of 1 million Hiroshima bombs wait in the global holster; that world military expenditures last year reached $550 billion; that armed forces now control the machinery of government in fifty-four countries in the developing world; that the United States and Russia, first in military power, rank tenth and thirty-first, respectively, among 141 nations in per capita gross national product; that the world spends 2,300 times as much for military activities as it does for peacekeeping; that subsidized dining by top military and civilian officials in the Pentagon costs U.S. taxpayers $14 per meal, while the Federal school lunch program for the poor spends only $1.20 per meal.

Journalists must begin asking far tougher questions, too. Helen Thomas, United Press International's White House correspondent, showed the way when she began the questioning at President Reagan's March 31 televised news conference. In response to his opening remarks on the quest for arms reduction, she asked:

> Mr. President, the experts say the Russians are far ahead of

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> us in some nuclear weaponry and we are far ahead of them in terms of Polaris missiles and so forth. And we also have the capability of swift, massive retaliation against the Soviets. Under those circumstances, why don't we seek negotiations for now and carry on to reduction? That way we can halt the making of doomsday weapons and save billions to help poor people.

Instead of carrying the usual news conference monotone, Thomas's voice was filled with a plea for reason. Like an ever-so-patient schoolteacher, the President tut-tutted that "the truth of the matter is that on balance the Soviet Union does have a definite margin of superiority." None of Thomas's colleagues took the trouble to ask the President to step outside the perimeter of deterrence strategy and debate the point. True, in the days that followed, the media reported that many specialists disagreed with the President. But most of the news stories hinged on whether the United States or the Soviet Union had a nuclear edge. Few of them bothered to suggest—much less stress—that in this age of overkill such a distinction is utterly irrelevant.

Advocating Advocacy

The special session on disarmament that convenes at the United Nations June 7 offers the nation's news organizations a watershed opportunity to break with the past and demonstrate a new and permanent commitment to covering the peace and disarmament movement. Instead of dropping by in June to note a couple of speeches and then departing, reporters and their editors should begin now to explore in detail the various proposals being developed for this session.

These are often complex and, unlike the last time, a considerable effort is being made to help journalists understand them. The Media Task Force of the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Disarmament is sponsoring more than a dozen background briefings by a wide range of experts on disarmament. In addition, the task force has put together a packet of thirty-six articles, monographs and booklets dealing with the nuclear crisis. This collection ranges from Ruth Leger Sivard's devastating booklet of statistics, *World Military and Social Expenditures 1981*, to a Gallup poll on nuclear "war" reprinted from *Newsweek*. (Accredited journalists may obtain more information on the briefings and receive the information packet by contacting Caroline Krebs or Andrew Tolan at the Network to Educate for World Security, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017.)

All this background, in addition to direct reporting, should provide more than enough material for a steady flow of incisive stories in advance of the session. And once the conference begins, the coverage should be increased. This, too, is not a wildly radical scenario, as anyone knows who has followed the quadrennial hoopla over national political conventions or the yearly hysteria among sportswriters at the Super Bowl. Of course, what gets news organizations so hot-eyed over those happenings is that they promise winners and losers. The 1982 special session on disarmament will not be so nicely clear-cut, any more than the 1978 session was. Peace will not be formally declared at the end of this year's meeting. But that's not the story. The story is the laborious,

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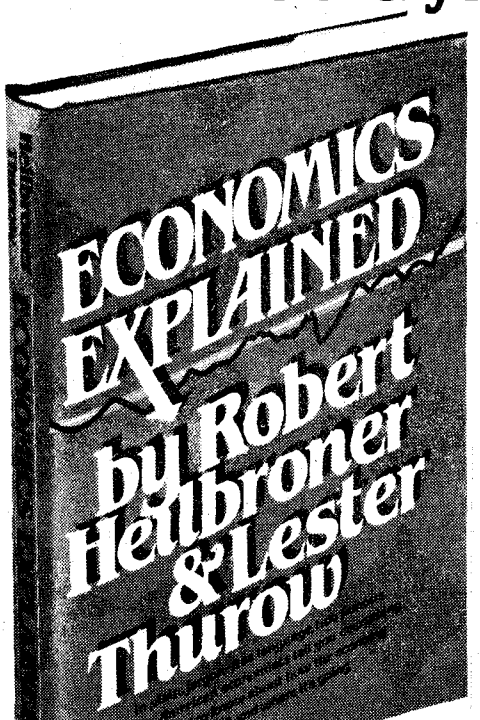
—Robert Heilbroner and Lester Thurow



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agonizing, ongoing process, one that will be with us for years and that may or may not save our skins. Ultimately, there will be winners or losers—humans.

It does no good to bleat about the Russians. *We* live in the open society, they don't; it is in the United States and the other democracies that the antinuclear movement must take hold and burgeon. Our media are obligated to help make this happen by fostering a climate for disarmament with the strongest journalism they can muster. We can't sit around waiting for *Pravda* to take the initiative. I am convinced that no sane Soviet leader wants to start a nuclear cataclysm. But if I am wrong, there is nothing we can do about it short of blowing them up in the bargain. Deterrence strategy, and the mad escalation that goes with it, is a bankrupt policy; the West has nothing to lose by carrying the antinuclear torch to the East relentlessly, with the media in the vanguard.

I am advocating advocacy journalism, in spades. On this issue, reporters carry no responsibility to give "the other side"; there is none. Broadcasters need not give listeners with opposing points of view equal time. The only time of any consequence now is that which is fast running out. □

How the Freeze Campaign Was Born

MICHAEL KAZIN

It is a simple idea which has launched a mass movement. "The People of the State of California," the initiative begins, "do hereby urge that the Government of the United States propose to the Government of the Soviet Union that both countries agree to immediately halt the testing, production, and further deployment of all nuclear weapons, missiles and delivery systems in a way that can be checked and verified by both sides."

In less than three months, thousands of volunteers from San Diego to the Oregon border put this statement on the November ballot. With the aid of an unprecedented coalition of churches, unions, political groups and celebrities, they collected the signatures of more than 600,000 registered voters and touched off a debate on nuclear war which has reached nationwide proportions and which will continue long after the campaign reaches its electoral climax this fall.

Across the country, the freeze initiative has been endorsed by an impressive array of no fewer than 414 political bodies (as of April 19): 317 town meetings, 67 city councils, 19 county councils, 3 state senatorial districts and, perhaps most impressive, the legislatures of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon, Vermont, Wisconsin and Iowa. In March a freeze resolution drafted by Senators Edward Kennedy and Mark Hatfield was endorsed by 21 senators and 150 representatives. George Kennan, W. Averell Harriman, Billy Graham and even former C.I.A. chief William Colby have publicly supported the idea.

President Reagan quickly denounced the Congressional resolution as a boon to the Soviet Union, but he is clearly worried that the public's fear of a global holocaust will upset his plan to spend as much as $250 billion over the next five years to "reassert" U.S. nuclear superiority. The movement must be taken seriously. In the words of columnist Joseph Kraft, no admirer of the freeze: "It shows that—for perhaps the first time in our national experience—the politics of mass protest are being brought into play in the matter of national defense."

The most persuasive aspect of the freeze is its appeal to common sense. With a growing cognizance that the United States and the Soviet Union possess over 50,000 nuclear warheads and are busily developing more sophisticated systems of overkill, a demand that both sides halt their madness seems as sensible as putting up sandbags before a flood. Moreover, its bilateral nature all but nullifies fears of a Soviet advantage and deprives Reaganites of the charge that the peace movement wants only the United States to disarm. Though just a first step away from the ultimate precipice, a freeze would derail the Administration's nuclear schemes, along with the cruise and Pershing missiles that have enraged half of Europe. It is a thoroughly rational idea with radical implications.

A year ago, Jo and Nick Seidita startled their friends in suburban Los Angeles with the news that they were going to begin a statewide campaign against the nuclear buildup. The Seiditas, who had long been active in liberal Democratic politics, were ignited by news of an East Coast success. "We got the idea from a clipping about three state senatorial districts in Massachusetts that passed a freeze initiative in 1980," Jo Seidita says. "The measure received 59 percent of the vote, though thirty of thirty-three towns in the area also voted for Reagan." Longtime peace activists who protested that it was too soon to undertake a statewide effort in California were met with stubborn self-confidence. "This is the most urgent issue of our time," Jo told me last May. "Americans *must* start talking about it."

By the fall, grass-roots drives were accelerating throughout the state. Established peace groups, the Los Angeles A.C.L.U., the Unitarian Church and the California Democratic Party endorsed the idea. Norman Cousins and Norman Lear contributed money and contacts. Edward Asner taped a promotional message for use at "petition parties" that condemned the "so-called nuclear strategists," who calmly calculate in megadeaths. Daniel Ellsberg went on Bay Area television stations to announce freeze meetings.

Religious groups stepped to the forefront of the campaign. The Southern and Northern California Boards of

Michael Kazin writes and teaches in San Francisco.

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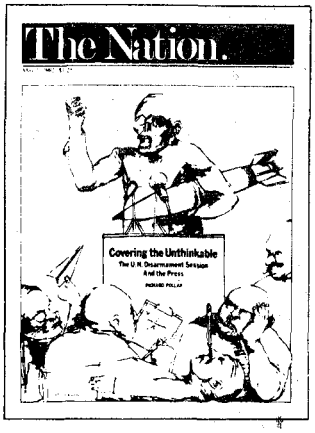

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Rabbis and state affiliates of the Methodists and Presbyterians quickly endorsed the initiative and encouraged their members to circulate petitions. On the 800th anniversary of the birth of Francis of Assisi, San Francisco Archbishop John Quinn, in an emotional address, blasted "the obsessive drive for security through nuclear weaponry" and urged "active cooperation" with the freeze campaign. The Archdiocese soon hired two full-time organizers to educate and collect signatures in the parishes.

Through an abnormally wet winter, the volunteer effort spread from offices in Oakland and Los Angeles to almost every one of the state's fifty-eight counties. The mammoth peace demonstrations in Western Europe had an animating effect, and Reagan's loose talk about a "limited" nuclear war transformed consternation into energy. *The Last Epidemic*, a half-hour film which shows how San Francisco would be totally annihilated by the explosion of a one-megaton bomb, was presented in homes, chapels and union halls.

Senator Alan Cranston, sensing a political trend, announced he would vote for the freeze. Both of President Reagan's daughters (one of whom, Maureen, is currently running for the Senate) signed the document. By late February, two months earlier than planned, enough signatures had been collected to put the initiative on the ballot.

The campaign's snowballing success has not blinded freeze organizers to the difficulty of winning the November election in the state where high-finance media politics was born. In California, left-leaning initiatives have a sad history of beginning with a healthy margin of support in spring polls only to collapse under a barrage of televised attacks during the final days of the campaign.

California also happens to be more intimately involved with nuclear weapons than any other state in the nation. Experts at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory design them, aerospace companies near San Jose and Los Angeles build them, and military bases in small towns like Concord and Alameda store them. Wealthy conservatives will stoke the anxiety of people nostalgic for the days when the United States held an atomic whip hand over the rest of the world.

Yet, seven months before the vote, the freeze campaign continues to expand with a sweep that reminds one of the movements for civil rights and against the war in Indochina. Such unlikely groups as the San Francisco Bar Association and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of Southern California recently endorsed the California initiative. Activists in five other states and more than twenty cities are waging similar drives for the fall election. In early March, an overwhelming majority of those town meetings in New England that considered the freeze voted to endorse it. In reporting the results, ABC marveled at the campaign's deep "roots in middle America."

Jonathan Schell wrote recently in *The New Yorker* that "the first, urgent, immediate step . . . is for each person to make known, visibly and unmistakably, his desire that the species survive." The freeze campaign is organizing that impulse and on a scale which may prove irresistible. □

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A Directory of Antinuclear Groups

"To the village square we must carry the facts of atomic energy. . . . From there must come America's voice," Albert Einstein once said. Now the voice has come.

The last ten years have seen the birth and development of a grass-roots movement against nuclear energy, and in the past few months a burgeoning movement against nuclear weapons has become a force to be reckoned with. At the center of this activism is the nuclear freeze campaign, calling for a bilateral freeze in the testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and of missiles and aircraft designed to deliver the bombs.

The challenge to the nuclear architects has been issued literally from village squares across the nation—from town meetings, city councils, county councils and state legislatures. The freeze campaign is being led by individuals and groups whose activities have been primarily community-based: rather than open offices in Washington, D.C., and go national, they have canvassed and organized their neighbors. Like the antinuclear-energy movement, the freeze campaign's biggest victories have been on the local level and its most valuable asset has been citizen action. From town meetings in Maine to petition-signing parties in California, freeze activists have forged a nationwide political movement—there is organized freeze activity in forty-three states by latest count—and have pushed the issue to the forefront of national attention. Even the Reagan Administration, whose pronouncements on the "winnability" of nuclear war did much to spark the campaign, has been forced to pay it lip service—though, to be sure, with a Jekyll-and-Hyde twist that attempts to justify further nuclear buildups.

Below is a directory of organizations that are active in antinuclear issues. It does not seek to be comprehensive—there are said to be well over 1,000 antinuclear groups in the country, varying greatly as to emphasis and action—but it does list the most important groups nationally and it provides a starter's guide for anyone interested in joining or finding out more about the antinuclear movement. The directory is alphabetical except for the first two organizations, which act as resource centers for the movement and maintain extensive lists of local groups working against nuclear weapons and/or nuclear energy. DAVID CORN

David Corn, a freelance writer in New York, often writes on nuclear issues. Research assistance for this directory was provided by Nation *interns Lee Bearson, Vandana Mathur and Peter Watrous.*

☐ Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign
National Clearinghouse
4144 Lindell Blvd.
Suite 404
St. Louis, Mo. 63108
314-533-1169
The clearinghouse monitors freeze activity nationwide and maintains a comprehensive list of local freeze organizers. It also publishes periodic updates of the freeze campaign and provides resources for local freeze activity.

☐ Nuclear Information
and Resource Service
1536 16th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-483-0045
The N.I.R.S. is a network center and a national clearinghouse for those concerned with nuclear issues. It maintains an extensive list of local antinuclear and safe-energy groups and provides information on nuclear issues.

☐ Abalone Alliance
944 Market St.
Room 307
San Francisco, Calif. 94102
415-861-0592
The Abalone Alliance is a coalition of more than sixty groups organized around many environmental and energy issues, including disarmament and nuclear energy.

☐ American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry St.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19102
215-241-7000
The A.F.S.C.'s thirty-five regional offices support local activities aimed at bilateral disarmament and national economic conversion.

☐ Citizen Action for Lasting Security
P.O. Box 12763
Salem, Ore. 97309
503-287-4299
Citizen Action maintains several offices throughout Oregon and acts as a liaison for the various state groups that support a bilateral freeze.

☐ Clamshell Alliance
595 Massachussetts Ave.
Cambridge, Mass. 02139
617-661-6204
Clamshell emphasizes educational activity and collective action related to the dangers of nuclear energy.

☐ Clergy and Laity Concerned
198 Broadway
Room 302
New York, N.Y. 10038
212-964-6730
C.A.L.C. is a religious organization that stresses peace and jobs instead of military spending. It actively supports bilateral disarmament and a nuclear freeze.

☐ Council for a Livable World
100 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
202-543-4100
The council specializes in political lobbying on nuclear arms control. It runs a telephone hotline on antinuclear events (202-543-0006).

☐ Council for a Nuclear Weapons
Freeze
2161 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, Mass. 02140
617-491-7809
The council educates and organizes people around the issue of a bilateral freeze.

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For further information on how to obtain this Manual call Toll Free (800) 528-6050 Ext. 56 or mail the following coupon to:

Dr. James F. Tierney
The Fund for Peace
345 East 46th St.
New York, NY 10017

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Zip: _____ NA 42282

☐ Council of Peacemaking and Religion
3940 Poplar Level Rd.
Louisville, Ky. 40213
502-458-0269
The council sponsors community education programs on war and peace issues in support of a bilateral freeze.

☐ Critical Mass Energy Project/ Public Citizen, Inc.
215 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
202-546-4790
Critical Mass is an advocacy group seeking to abolish nuclear power in favor of safe energy alternatives. It publishes *Critical Mass Energy Journal.*

☐ Friends of the Earth
1045 Sansome St.
San Francisco, Calif. 94111
415-433-7373
Through its nine regional offices, F.O.E. lobbies for a bilateral freeze and a phase-out of nuclear power plants.

☐ Fund for Peace
345 East 46th St.
New York, N.Y. 10017
212-661-5900
The fund is an umbrella organization that supports both a "no first strike" policy and bilateral arms reduction. It has set up a toll-free hotline for information on antinuclear activities. (800-528-6050).

☐ Greenpeace
2007 R St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009
202-462-1177
Primarily concerned with preserving the marine ecosystem, Greenpeace focuses on a nuclear test-ban treaty and supports bilateral arms reduction.

☐ Ground Zero
806 15th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005
202-638-7402
Ground Zero is a nonadvocacy educational group that disseminates information on the hazards of nuclear war. It does not take a stand on the freeze, but emphasizes mutual initiatives on the part of the United States and the Soviet Union.

☐ Interfaith Center to Reverse the Arms Race
132 North Euclid
Pasadena, Calif. 91101
213-449-9430
The Interfaith Center supports a bilateral freeze and provides resources for the disarmament movement.

☐ June 12 Rally Committee
853 Broadway
Suite 2109
New York, N.Y. 10003
212-460-8980
This is a national coalition of peace, religious, labor, minority, women's and community groups that are organizing a march for nuclear disarmament and human needs from the United Nations to Central Park in New York City on June 12.

☐ Lawyers Alliance for Nuclear Arms Control
14 Beacon St.
Boston, Mass. 02108
617-227-0118
The Lawyers Alliance tries to educate attorneys about the dangers of nuclear war and the benefits of a bilateral freeze. It is now establishing thirty regional offices.

☐ The Manhattan Project
15 Rutherford Place
New York, N.Y. 10003
212-598-0971
The project, part of the American Friends Service Committee, coordinates freeze activities around the New York metropolitan area.

☐ Mobilization for Survival
48 St. Marks Place
New York, N.Y. 10003
212-460-8545
A coalition of peace and antinuclear groups, Mobilization for Survival strives to reverse the arms race, put an end to nuclear weapons and power, and shift resources from military to human needs.

☐ National Council of Churches of Christ
475 Riverside Dr.
New York, N.Y. 10115
212-870-2200
The council, the largest ecumenical organization in the United States, works with other religious groups on arms control issues and supports a bilateral freeze.

☐ National Peace Council
P.O. Box 5789
Fresno, Calif. 93755
209-298-4105

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The N.P.C. works with other California peace groups in support of a bilateral freeze.

☐ Natural Resources Defense Council
1725 I St., N.W.
Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20006
202-223-8210
A legal and scientific organization founded to concentrate on environmental concerns, the N.R.D.C. is now active in nuclear nonproliferation issues.

☐ North Shore Peace Initiative
723 Seward St.
Evanston, Ill. 60202
312-475-3692
Founded by several religious groups, the Peace Initiative promotes local campaigns in support of a bilateral freeze.

☐ Nuke Watch
315 W. Gorham St.
Madison, Wis. 53703
608-256-4146
Nuke Watch functions as a clearinghouse on nuclear power and arms issues and advises other antinuclear groups.

☐ People for Survival
1925 Nicollet
Suite 101
Minneapolis, Minn. 55403
612-870-1501
People for Survival runs a statewide network that organizes petition drives and study groups on unilateral disarmament.

☐ Performing Artists for Nuclear Disarmament
P.O. Box 775
Cooper Station
New York, N.Y. 10276
212-477-0822
P.A.N.D. is a membership organization for performing artists. It organizes music, dance, film and theater performances around disarmament issues and supports the national freeze campaign.

☐ Physicians for Social Responsibility
P.O. Box 144
Watertown, Mass. 02172
617-924-3468
With more than 100 chapters, Physicians for Social Responsibility attempts to educate the public on the hazards of nuclear war.

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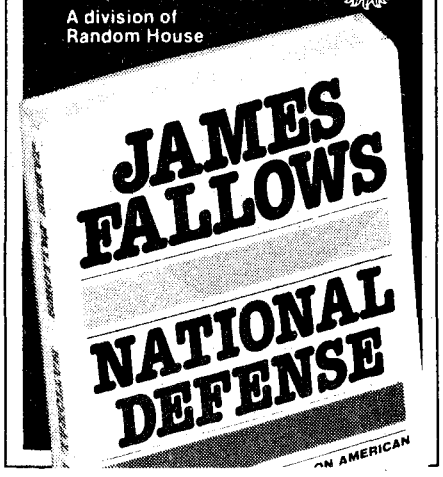

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☐ Riverside Church Disarmament Program
490 Riverside Dr.
New York, N.Y. 10027
212-222-5900
The program disseminates information to religious groups nationwide and organizes in the New York City area in support of a bilateral freeze and disarmament.

☐ SANE
711 G St., S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
202-546-7100
SANE runs educational campaigns for both nuclear disarmament and the conversion of military-oriented industry to peaceful purposes.

☐ Shad Alliance
339 Lafayette St.
New York, N.Y. 10012
212-475-4539
Shad is an antinuclear-energy group that focuses on the Indian Point and Shoreham reactors, both located near New York City.

☐ Union of Concerned Scientists
1384 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, Mass. 02238
617-547-5552
The union runs public education programs on health and safety issues related to nuclear energy and weapons. It supports a bilateral freeze as well as a "no first strike" policy.

☐ War Resisters League
339 Lafayette St.
New York, N.Y. 10012
212-228-0450
The W.R.L., which has thirty branches across the country, is a pacifist organization that supports unilateral disarmament.

☐ Women Strike for Peace
145 South 13th St.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19107
215-923-0861
W.S.P., with twelve chapters nationwide, educates the public on how nuclear war can be averted. It supports a bilateral freeze.

☐ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
1213 Race St.
Philadelphia, Pa. 19107
215-563-7110
With 120 branches, W.I.L.P.F. supports a bilateral freeze through its S.T.A.R. (Stop the Arms Race) campaign.

EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 512*)
might have thought twice about either refusing to vote or casting a null ballot.

Suppose we assume that the voter turnout demonstrates the courage of a citizenry that wants peace and democracy and opposes all violence by the left and the right. Can we, like Briggs, say that these elections were a good first step toward that? Unfortunately no. The best argument Briggs could have made for the elections was a very minimal one: they would strengthen the power of the Christian Democrats or other moderate forces in beginning to control the military and the paramilitary forces and open the political process. But even the inclusion of the Christian Democrats in any new coalition cannot hide the fact that they are less powerful than before. Power has shifted to ultra-right-wing groups that have for decades opposed any serious effort to establish democracy. Their rhetoric may change to gain support from a wary U.S. Congress, but new political leaders like d'Aubuisson who helped organize death squads will be less willing than the Christian Democrats to end the current violence and repression.

The Reagan Administration's strategy was wrong from the start. Its refusal to back negotiations and restrict military aid has helped prolong and intensify a bloody conflict that has cost over 12,000 lives since Reagan took office in 1981—most of those at the hands of those whom we have supported. By undermining the Christian Democrats and strengthening the ultraright, the elections have set back democracy and betrayed the faith of many who voted. If the Reagan Administration now clothes the new emperors of El Salvador in "moderate civilian" suits and attempts to justify military aid for what is really a nakedly repressive regime, the possibilities for peace and democracy will be diminished still further.

The United States must now pursue a creative diplomatic strategy to increase the chances for democracy and end the carnage in El Salvador. We must make military aid conditional on an end to repression and provide our full support for negotiations that include all major factions. Those negotiations should establish a cease-fire, guarantee against repression of opposition leaders and civilians, and immediately implement full civil and political rights.

Morris Blachman
Kenneth Sharpe

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

'Invisible Man' At Thirty

ALICE K. TURNER

There's nothing literary folk like better than taking odds on what, in the flood of books that rolls forth each year, will float for longer than, say, a decade. The yearly prizes give way to reassurances and reassessments, with anxious glances at what is being taught and at what young people have actually heard of, let alone read. Thus, in 1965, a *Book Week* poll of "200 prominent authors, critics and editors" chose Ralph Ellison's first novel, *Invisible Man*, published in 1952, as "the most distinguished single work published in the last 20 years."

Now, on the novel's thirtieth anniversary, Random House is reissuing it, affirming the editors' faith in its distinction (despite its singularity, for Ellison never gratified his publishers with another) and its continuing buoyancy.* They're surely right to do so, for the book survives wonderfully well; a new poll that limited the prize candidates to American novels might easily shore up *Invisible Man*'s claim as the most distinguished postwar work yet published.

Certainly, it has been extraordinarily influential. That memorable introduction, a gravely cynical classic of alienation, conducted in the glare of 1,369 light bulbs to the sweet smell of marijuana smoke and the plaintive growl of Louis Armstrong asking,

> What did I do
> To be so black
> And blue?

must have been the envy and inspiration of the entire Beat Generation, not to mention Norman Mailer in his "White Negro" phase. Ellison's use of knockabout farce with an edge of rue to dramatize deadly serious affairs predated the Black Humorists of the 1960s and the essays into surrealism which followed. And, of course, there can't be a black writer who hasn't studied his work.

Ellison has always ducked the mantle of dean of black (he would say Negro) writers, claiming, quite correctly, to be squarely in the American mainstream. If *Invisible Man*'s roots reach back to Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground*, to Dickens and to a number of "young man from the provinces" novels popular in France, they owe even more to American writers like Melville (who provides an epigraph) and Twain. Maybe that's why the book seems so fresh: it was the start of something new, but it also skipped back to the solid foundations of the nineteenth century.

If the ultimate appeal of a novel is to young people, as many have claimed, *Invisible Man* is well grounded here too. Its theme is the education of a young person. Its setting is, mainly, an eerie, glittering Harlem, as magical and seductive as any El Dorado, and its villains are the changing faces of the Establishment: black and white grown-ups, educators, rich businessmen, manipulative do-gooders, demanding women, insistent rabble-rousers, powerful criminals. The prose is strong but easily accessible, the pace antic, the characters identifiable (as befits a picaresque novel) and the predicaments precarious and hilarious. What more could a young person ask for than to get both idealism and alienation in the same bag?

What's more, the novel has a strange precognitive quality, as though it were a glass through which the decades that followed its publication were seen darkly. Although the Brotherhood that the hero joins is presumably a takeoff on various leftist groups of the 1930s and 1940s, it stands in uncannily well for the Movement of the 1960s. Ras the Exhorter sounds a lot like Rap Brown or even Malcolm X. The ineffable Rinehart—"Rine the runner and Rine the gambler and Rine the briber and Rine the lover and Rine the Reverend"—brings to mind the sinister Harlem superhero Nicky Barnes. The riots, looting and arson, the "woman question," the black-white comedy, the refuge in music and drugs, all seem to belong to a time *after* the book was published—and it's hardly sufficient to proclaim that the black subculture often previews subsequent mass movements.

All in all, it wouldn't take much to turn this thirty-year-old novel into a thoroughly contemporary Richard Pryor movie—just a little dirty talk. Perhaps the sole proof that the book dates from 1952 is the fact that it contains only one "forbidden" four-letter word. And yet despite this, it turns out that *Invisible Man* is on the list of books banned by some schools. How curious this is: the book deals with sex discreetly (far more discreetly than *Tom Jones*, say); its language is pure; it is a book that knows no color boundary, so that black and white students can enjoy it equally. Its only fault would seem to be comic subversiveness, healthy fare for young people up against their own Establishments. □

**Invisible Man*. By Ralph Ellison. Random House. 440 pp. $15.95.

Alice K. Turner is Playboy*'s fiction editor.*

Anxiety and Its Displacement

NEIL SCHMITZ

THE FATE OF THE EARTH. *By Jonathan Schell. Alfred A. Knopf. 244 pp. $11.95.*

The strong point of Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* is that it compels us to think about the present danger of nuclear war. Schell takes us straight into the discourse, appropriates the several languages (pure and applied) of the nuclear scientist, splits the atom, describes Hiroshima, gives us paradigms, statistics, scenarios and vistas, somberly calculates the "rough probabilities" of a nuclear holocaust and then draws us a picture of the consequences. A twenty-megaton bomb explodes over the Empire State Building: "The fireball would be about four and a half miles in diameter and would radiate the thermal pulse for some twenty seconds. People caught in the open twenty-three miles away from ground zero, in Long Island, New Jersey, and southern New York State, would be burned to death." All that frightful data is then magnified. A 10,000-megaton attack on the continental United States rains fireballs, and this is the sum of it, a "simplicity of nothingness."

Neil Schmitz teaches literature at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

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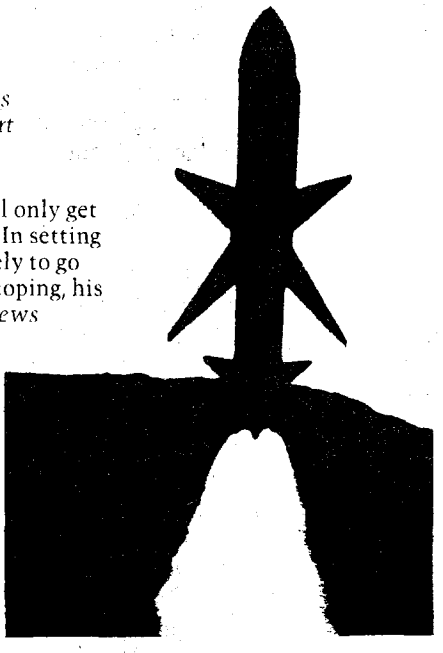

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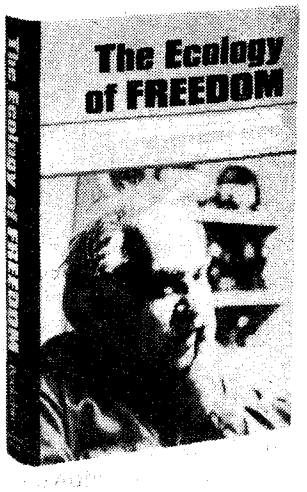

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That we have allowed the "realists" to determine this discourse, promulgate nuclear policy, rationalize that catastrophe, Schell argues, is due in part to our own reluctance to think the issue through, to face this death of deaths. We, too, must think the Unthinkable, confront what has already been projected, the probable extinction of humankind, and then consider our "political responsibilities." The hard, seemingly inhuman knowledge, the knowledge of fission, of fusion, is now and forever reality, and it will always yield the know-how of bomb-making. So we must enter the ongoing discourse, which plots limited nuclear wars and draws uncrossable lines on the map with the point of a nuclear missile; we must realize how dehumanized it is, how deranged, and come in close upon its mystification, its magic words: *deterrence, national sovereignty.*

All this strong polemical work is achieved in the first section of the book, "A Republic of Insects and Grass," and then something happens in Schell's treatise. A circumlocution appears, a soliloquy that deflects our critical attention from the systematic thinking of the Unthinkable—the hard discourse of the strategist and the expert—to a philosophical exploration of the Unthinkable as a condition in human language. As Schell laboriously explains why we should go on living and keep the common world intact and tidy for our children, I begin to lose touch with his prose. Here's Hannah Arendt, there's Hegel. I recognize this soft, foolish, solemn language as mine, the disarming parlance of the humanist, and I am embarrassed, a little, by the innocence of its rhetoric, its poignance. It does not speak to me. It speaks for me. To whom, then, is this middle essay on the value of life, "The Second Death," addressed? Thanatos, and all his minions: the "realists," the "militarists," the "conservatives," the "upholders of the status quo," those who adhere to a "Newtonian politics in an Einsteinian world."

The fundamental problem, Schell repeatedly tells us, is the "politics of the day," the "world's political arrangements," the "system of independent, sovereign nation-states." All this must change: "Just as we have chosen to live in the system of sovereign states, we can choose to live in some other system." The abstraction of the argument at this point in the book is itself a mystifica-

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tion, the certain sign of an aversion. Having flushed us out from our anxiety about death and made us think the Unthinkable, the extinction of humankind, Schell then carefully guides us past the prickly understanding of how almost all of humankind is systematically excluded from deciding that momentous question. Here, it might be said, is a life anxiety more compelling than the death anxiety, the grim realization of who it is that has the fate of the earth by the throat. Schell's displacement of this anxiety, that Unthinkable, sets it freely afloat in his text.

If we are indeed to think as citizens of the world, then we must be sufficiently unrepressed to speak openly about the aggressive character of American nuclear policy. Schell is perfectly aware that the "realists"—who have decided that policy since 1945, written its terms and explained its value, who are striving at this very moment to maintain at least the semblance of nuclear mastery—have never found this interpretation of their motives admissible, and he takes their intransigence on this matter fully into account. It is his intention to write apolitically about nuclear disarmament, to think above ideology, to make the broadest possible appeal; and to that end he restricts himself to the "physical extent, the human significance, and the practical dimensions of the nuclear predicament in which the whole world now finds itself." When Schell admits the political into his discussion, he generalizes it, globally disperses its meaning. Skeptical readers will perceive within that culpable system of independent, sovereign nation-states, the blank prospect of the basic problem, as Schell sees it, the preeminent nuclear power in that system, a bristling, imperial nation-state, the one that has determined the nuclear arms race from the beginning, and they will wonder about the reluctance to designate it in this text.

There is a reason for this dissembling. Schell doesn't wish to excite the paranoia of the American right with specific political analysis, with a precise remembering of history, nor does he want to alienate the "realists" by challenging their "defensive" posture, and yet this tactic of talking around American responsibility for the crisis leads him finally to an obfuscation of the nuclear peril. Schell generously forgives American scientists their astonishing lack of chivalry (there is no mention of Edward Teller in this book) and he will remind us that the "doctrine of nuclear deterrence has commanded the sincere respect and adherence of many people of good will—especially when they found themselves arguing, as they so often did, with the adherents of traditional military doctrine, who even today, in the face of extinction itself, go on arguing for 'military superiority,' and the like."

When Schell comes at last to the question of deterrence, of national sovereignty, in his peroration, "The Choice," he attacks these terms as if they were logical problems, quirky syllogisms whose illogicality requires demonstration. The reasoning in these passages is keen, but the argument to which Schell refers—that one between the "sincere" proponents of nuclear deterrence and the crazy adherents of "military superiority"—is itself false, a screen. These terms, *deterrence*, *national sovereignty*, are masking terms, swollen with obvious duplicity, and not to be taken at face value. We are indebted to Richard Nixon for temporarily disabling the effective use of "national security." American politicians wonderfully misspeak their double-talk. What we need from Schell, who wishes to expose the danger of nuclear war, is a radical dismantling of the presuppositions of American nuclear policy.

The fate of the earth, after all, is still pretty much in certain American hands. They have the world by the throat. This is the Unspeakable that lurks within Schell's version of the Unthinkable. The concept of nuclear deterrence has always signified, with brutal simplicity, an American superiority in nuclear weaponry, a superiority that has been aggressively exercised in American foreign policy. When citizens of the world, especially those poor souls on the far side of the Iron Curtain, look at how America defines its national sovereignty, they are justly amazed and pardonably frightened, for this sovereignty comprises Western Europe, Latin America, most of Africa, the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia. Within this sphere, the United States calculates its "vital interests," considers its options and devises its numerous plans. To the extent that Schell evades this particular interpretation of the world's problem, *The Fate of the Earth* is parochial in its vision, not at all disinterested, even self-serving. □

Interpretive Reporting

JAMES ARONSON

JOE McCARTHY AND THE PRESS. *By Edwin R. Bayley. University of Wisconsin Press. 270 pp. $16.50.*

> *I think this is the most unheard-of thing I ever heard of.*
>
> —Senator McCarthy, August 26, 1954

In this classic statement, Joe McCarthy was registering his displeasure over a ruling by the chairman of the Senate Select Committee charging him with conduct unbecoming a member of the Gentlemen's Club. Unhinged as this comment was, it could also characterize the four and a half year period that has come to be known as the McCarthy Era.

As the years dwindle down, there are an ever more precious few of us who can say, "I remember Joe." Edwin Bayley, a Wisconsin journalist who is now dean of the graduate school of journalism at the University of California at Berkeley, is one of the few. I am another. The distinction between us, however, is that Bayley covered McCarthy, and McCarthy covered me—or tried to—with bold applications of red paint.

To put first things first, Bayley has established an incontrovertible record of the miserable marriage between a master charlatan and the American press—miserable, that is, for the Republic. It is a record of publishers egging on the scourge of the "International Communist Conspiracy" in the name of national security; of editors salivating over yards of Red-scare copy and yelling for more; of journalists feeding McCarthy information for his Red mill, writing speeches for him, getting drunk with him in hotel bars and telling him what a phony he was—an estimation these same re-

James Aronson, a professor of journalism at Hunter College of the City University of New York, is the author of The Press and the Cold War *(Bobst-Merrill, Beacon paperback).*

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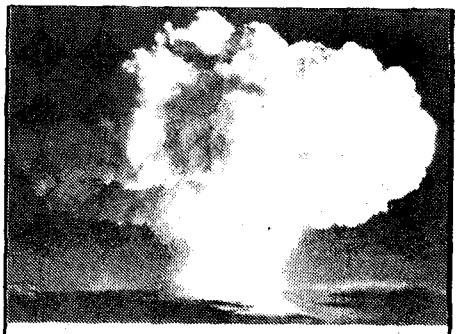

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Foreword by Paul C. Warnke

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porters never hinted at in print.

What a glorious spree it was—until the sobering dawn, several hundred casualties later, produced a twitch in some journalistic bowels. For that queasiness the journalists summoned Ol' Doc Objectivity, who administered absolution pills to be taken three times a day, one after each edition. Listen to the retrospective testimony:

Charles Seib, who covered McCarthy for Hearst's International News Service before it merged into United Press International (and who later sat in judgment of his colleagues as ombudsman of *The Washington Post*): "The McCarthy controversy . . . was sort of a game for us, as it was for McCarthy. We were so caught up in the game that we did not worry much about the effects. 'Not my problem,' we said."

Richard J.H. Johnston, chief of *The New York Times*'s Chicago bureau: "I came to the conclusion that in the strictest sense of the word [McCarthy] didn't understand a goddamn thing he was doing except that it was getting him a lot of notoriety."

William Theis of International News Service (now with the American Petroleum Institute): "We let Joe get away with murder. . . . It was just a big lark to Joe. He was like the kid in the candy store, trying to grab everything he could."

George Reedy, who covered McCarthy for the United Press, later became press secretary to President Johnson and is now a professor of journalism at Marquette University: "Joe couldn't find a Communist in Red Square—he didn't know Karl Marx from Groucho. . . . Talking to Joe was like putting your hand in a bowl of mush."

Reedy told Bayley that after a while he couldn't take it any longer. So he took his hand out of the mush bowl and quit journalism. After all, what was a fellow to do? McCarthy was a "United States Senator." You had to cover him: "The press didn't make Joe; the press is just a form of communication." Seib now feels that perhaps the "devil-may-care kind of journalism we practiced was more dangerous than I realized." For Johnston at *The New York Times*, there seems to have been no geyser of remorse.

An almost palpable nostalgia runs through many of these reflections on the period. There is also a universal invocation of the unwritten Canon of Objectivity, which is meant to excuse the press's failure to cover McCarthy properly. Yet for those journalists who were truly concerned about full and fair reporting, there were better ways to cover the story, and Bayley himself was among the few who dared to try one of those ways.

Bayley was a political correspondent for *The Milwaukee Journal*, a paper McCarthy despised. Immediately after McCarthy made one of his outlandish charges, Bayley would find every bit of information he could about the victim—and about the validity of the charges against him or her—and weave the material into the story by means of bracketed inserts. Sometimes he wrote sidebars to set alongside the main story. The practice was *genuinely* objective because it offered the most complete and balanced story possible.

Few papers, however, adopted this practice. The wire services were timid, limited and lopsided in their coverage. Headlines were "inaccurate to the point of contradiction," and even stories in *The New York Times* "were not the kind that would irritate McCarthy."

Then, after years of collaboration with McCarthy, the press in 1954 suddenly discovered the concept of interpretive reporting. Several papers began to inspect him more thoroughly. The Associated Press sent its best reporters on a digging expedition and published the results in a series. *The New York World-Telegram*, flagship of the Scripps-Howard chain and an ardent McCarthy supporter, spanked off Frederick Woltman (Pulitzer Prize winner in 1946 for excellence in journalistic Red baiting) to sniff out McCarthy's record. Reluctantly, he found the Senator wanting. Bayley sees this as a "journalistic signal" to the politicians that McCarthy had to go. I see it the other way around.

To begin with, interpretive reporting was employed long before 1954. The first edition of Curtis MacDougall's respected *Interpretative Reporting* was published in 1938. In 1946, as a staff writer of *The New York Times*'s Week in Review, I was drilled to my marrow by interpretive reporting's chief advocate, Lester Markel, the Sunday editor. In short, interpretive reporting was put in practice *whenever the editors wanted to use it.*

Nor did the signal that McCarthy was through come from the press. It came from the White House. In 1954 President Eisenhower cried "Enough!" when his West Point buddy Gen. Ralph

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W. Zwicker was declared by McCarthy to be "unfit to wear the uniform." The Army-McCarthy hearings in the spring of 1954 revealed the Senator as a shabby embarrassment, and the Senate Select Committee finished him off that fall with its vote to "condemn" him.

And—wonder to tell!—McCarthy was no longer news. He was still George Reedy's "United States Senator," still chairman of a powerful committee, but he had been declared by the establishment to be clinically dead, and the press interred him. His job was done: "McCarthyism" had been institutionalized.

Bayley lays out the press's role in the process with meticulous research and unchallengeable documentation. The book is a mine of source material for cold war scholars, for analysts of journalism, for past and future victims of government oppression and, I dearly hope, for a new generation of journalists. Yet for all the damning facts, Bayley seems reluctant to place upon the press the onus I believe it deserves. It might be said that there is in the work a deficiency of interpretive reporting.

There also are some omissions. I played a role in one of them. McCarthy loved to characterize the papers that opposed him as the "left-wing press" (*The Washington Post*, for example, became the "*Washington Daily Worker*"). But there was a real left-wing press that had fought Joe McCarthy from the beginning in 1950. One such paper was *The National Guardian*, a weekly of which Cedric Belfrage, who had chosen foolishly to be born of English parents, was editor and I executive editor. We were summoned before the McCarthy committee in May 1953, at the peak of *The Guardian*'s campaign to prevent the execution of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg as "atomic spies." We followed immediately after James Wechsler, then editor of *The New York Post*, which had offended McCarthy with a series of unflattering articles about him.

Twenty-four hours after our unfriendly appearance, Belfrage was arrested by immigration authorities and subjected to a string of deportation hearings. After a two-year battle (during which he spent four months in prison without having been charged with a crime), he was forced to leave the country, his family and his job for England—one year after McCarthy had been discarded. The cruelty of the process aside, it was a clear violation of the First Amendment, as was Wechsler's summons. The difference was that Wechsler, with impeccable anti-Communist credentials, got full play and editorial support in the general press, and in Bayley's book. The Belfrage story was almost entirely ignored in the press and, sadly, finds no place in Bayley's book.

In August 1953 the Wechsler-McCarthy hearing transcripts were reviewed, at Wechsler's request, by a committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors to determine whether his First Amendment rights had been violated by McCarthy. The committee as a whole came to no decision, but a dissenting minority did. They wrote:

"Whatever inconvenience results, whatever controversy ensues, we are compelled by every command of duty to brand this and every threat to freedom of the press, from whatever source, as a peril to American freedom."

Or, as it was written in Matthew 25:40, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." □

Environments and Elitists

DENNIS DRABELLE

DOWN THE RIVER. *By Edward Abbey. E.P. Dutton. 242 pp. $13.95. Paper $6.95.*

Conservation groups are awash in new members and augmented funds. In the last year, for example, the Sierra Club's membership increased from 175,000 to 275,000. Yet the Reagan Administration could hardly be more hostile to the conservationists' goals, and many of the accomplishments of the ecologically aware 1960s and 1970s—the wilderness system, the Clean Air Act, the general agreement that forests should not be logged faster than they can replenish themselves—are in jeopardy. Indeed, there seems to be a perverse relationship between the phenomena: as environmentalists have lost influence, they've gained members and public acceptance.

Fortunately for the cause of conservation, the chief executors of the Administration's retrograde environmental policies—Interior Secretary James Watt and Environmental Protection Agency head Anne Gorsuch—are less than endearing. Watt, in particular, has a knack for drawing fire; his appearances at Congressional hearings have been more combative than Nixon's last press conferences. As a result, Congress has consistently checked his efforts to loose oil and mining companies on scenic Federal lands.

There are signs, however, that Watt is learning. He took what for him was the novel step of consulting appropriate Republican lawmakers about his recent wilderness policy before announcing it on *Meet the Press*. He has always known that the best way to discredit environmentalists is to call them elitists. The term is discomforting because it pits environmentalists against workers and unions while it unnerves liberal politicians who sense there is some good reason for its use.

As Stephen Fox has shown in *John Muir and His Legacy*, the conservation movement originally depended upon the volunteer labor of "radical amateurs" who had independent incomes and ample leisure to spend on their causes. A prime example was Rosalie Edge. Though she lacked expertise in law, science or politics, she had all the advantages of an affluent, genteel upbringing. During the 1930s she molded the docile Audubon Society into a potent force and transformed Pennsylvania's Hawk Mountain from a hunter's paradise to a wildlife sanctuary.

There was a pronounced WASPish clannishness to the early movement. New York bird-lovers charged Italian immigrants with killing song birds, and in 1913 the director of the Bronx Zoo wrote: "All members of the lower classes of southern Europe are a dangerous menace to our wild life." For decades one could not join the Sierra Club without being sponsored by two members.

All this changed with the renaissance of conservationism that began at the time of Earth Day, 1970. The well-heeled amateur has given way to the professional, who is likely to have a degree in law, biology or forestry. Far from restricting membership, the conservation groups use direct-mail campaigns to encourage it. Yet old epithets

Dennis Drabelle is a lawyer and writer who specializes in environmental matters.

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die hard, and the charge that environmentalists guard the status quo to suit their parochial interests has remarkable staying power. (For its latest formulation, see William Tucker's article in the March *Harper's*.)

In this context Edward Abbey's immense popularity among environmentalists is puzzling, for with each book he sounds more and more like that Bronx zookeeper. A former employee of the National Park Service, Abbey properly calls himself not a naturalist but a chronicler of "travel and adventure." He may be the best-selling writer on environmental matters in the country. In the 1960s, his *Desert Solitaire* was a word-of-mouth success, and his new collection of reports and polemics, *Down the River*, appears in a combined cloth and paperback printing of 20,000 copies.

Abbey works hard at his iconoclasm. His half-jocular rationale for wilderness preservation is the necessity for remote guerrilla bases from which to resist political oppression. Lately, however, two less attractive qualities have entered his work: arrogance and xenophobia. The arrogance manifests itself in the offhand abuse of respectable writers such as Lewis Thomas, who is characterized in *Down the River* as an "official spokesman for the cancer industry." Elsewhere Abbey lumps Thomas with Carl Sagan, Alvin Toffler, Jeremy Bernstein, John McPhee, R. Buckminster Fuller, Gerard O'Neill and Timothy Leary as "apologists for the glossy technocracy rising around us in walls of aluminum and glass." It seems unlikely that these disparate writers have a common approach to "technocracy," but that is unimportant to Abbey, who offers no explanation for sticking them together.

Abbey's attitude toward himself ranges from dopey deprecation—he claims not to have had an original thought since World War II—to puerile smugness. In a piece about a raft trip through the Grand Canyon, he writes, "When the cities lie at the monster's feet, we shall come here, my very few friends and I, my sons and daughter, and we will survive. We shall live."

Xenophobia surfaces in the title essay, where Abbey discusses illegal immigration from Mexico. If we leave our borders open to unlimited immigration, he snarls, "it won't be long [until] the social, political, economic life of the United States is reduced to the level of

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life in Juarez. Guadalajara. Mexico City. San Salvador. Haiti. India. To a common peneplain of overcrowding, squalor, misery, oppression, torture, and hate."

This is not the place to analyze our border policy—only to note that Abbey's screed on the issue evinces a churlish hauteur. It goes without saying that one purpose of any nation's immigration policy is to protect its values by keeping out others who are perceived as threatening those values. But what is the purpose of expressing such contempt for other societies?

Abbey's outbursts are all the more disappointing when you consider the several valuable things in his book, especially a powerful essay on a lengthy protest outside a nuclear bomb factory in Rocky Flats, Colorado. But since he prides himself above all on his prickly independence, Abbey will no doubt be unmoved by the observation that many of his attitudes give aid and comfort to the enemies of conservation by inviting them to apply the label of elitism in a case where it is no longer justified. □

Workers and Wobblies

FRANK DONNER

AT THE POINT OF PRODUCTION: The Local History of the I.W.W. *Edited by Joseph R. Conlin. Greenwood Press. 329 pp. $29.95.*

FELLOW WORKERS AND FRIENDS: I.W.W. Free-Speech Fights as Told by Participants. *Edited by Philip S. Foner. Greenwood Press. 242 pp. $29.95.*

These books are the latest additions to a stream of publications about the Industrial Workers of the World that began in the 1960s. The Wobblies are now recognized as an authentic expression of American radicalism, a key legacy of the Progressive Era, while the response to them over the years has proved a valuable index of the ways in which big business has dealt with challenges to the status quo.

The anarcho-syndicalist ideology of the I.W.W. has long since been laid to rest. What fascinates a new generation of liberals and radicals is the staunch commitment of the Wobblies in the face of repeated terrorist assaults, their spirited style ("In the struggle itself lies the happiness," wrote one of them from jail) and their creativity in devising tactics to gain support and defeat their powerful adversaries.

In addition to leading a number of strikes—some of which had been called by others—the Wobblies also engaged in several related struggles for free speech. Joseph Conlin's book presents ten accounts of major labor-management conflicts by labor and urban historians. Most of these essays are too narrowly focused and too academic to be of interest to the general reader, with the exception of James Osborne's piece on the Paterson silk strikes. There is also a rewarding introductory survey of I.W.W. historiography by Conlin and an extensive bibliographical guide, "Sources for the Local History of the I.W.W.," by Dione Miles.

Philip Foner's collection of ten accounts of I.W.W. free speech battles will probably be of more interest to nonspecialists. The free speech fights described took place in Missoula, Montana (1909), Spokane (1909-10), Fresno, California (1910-11), Aberdeen, Washington (1911-12), San Diego (1912), Denver (1913), Minot, North Dakota (1913), Aberdeen, South Dakota (1914), Kansas City, Missouri (1914) and Everett, Washington (1916). These struggles were markedly more successful than the strikes described in the Conlin volume. They grew out of local prohibitions on outdoor meetings that were specifically directed against radical groups. (The Salvation Army's outdoor meetings were either specifically excepted or granted on-site protection by police.)

The Wobblies mobilized not to bring test cases to court but to force a policy change by filling the jails. They were usually arrested immediately after their four-word greeting: "Friends and fellow workers." The authorities were frequently compelled to fashion makeshift stockades for the overflow after the cells had been stuffed. In some instances the Wobblies were charged with more serious offenses in order to justify sending them away to a county or state jail. Once in jail the Wobblies proceeded to organize protests against prison conditions. Their strategy also involved demanding separate—and costly—jury trials. To avoid this expense, the authorities often reduced the charges. There was no end to the game. As soon as the Wobblies were released from jail, they returned to their soapboxes and persisted until the offending ordinance was revoked; they refused to accept any of the compromises offered to them. In some cases the authorities fought back by driving the stubborn Wobblies out of town or by meeting them at its outskirts with guns and clubs.

The free speech fights described in *Fellow Workers and Friends* sharpen our understanding of the outdoor meeting as an instrument of protest in the Progressive Era. For the Wobblies they became a prime mode of confrontation, education and recruitment—a form of political theater in which the crowd, not the speaker, played the starring role as a result of its size, its vociferous responses and, most important, its songs. Outdoor marches and rallies were important in labor struggles: they solved the problem of communicating in employer-controlled areas, and they saved the cost of renting halls (which in any event could not offer anonymity to the participants or generate the confrontational dynamics best suited to labor disputes).

The assault on the Wobblies reflected the widespread corruption of local authorities by business interests determined to destroy what was correctly perceived as a threat to their control. And underlying the Wobblies' resistance was their belief that if they could not reach their immediate goals, they would at least force the local power holders to pay a price—by revealing *urbi et orbi* their true masters.

The Foner volume illuminates in frightening detail the violence and brutality which Progressive Era business and professional elites directed against the Wobblies, whom they depicted as bloodthirsty, godless and immoral revolutionists. Ironically, the Wobblies attracted a following fully as much for their courage in risking physical and verbal abuse as for their message.

The attacks were led by various "citizens associations," which consisted of leading merchants, managers of factories, mines and mills, professionals

Frank Donner is director of the American Civil Liberties Union research project on political surveillance and author of a recent book on the subject, The Age of Surveillance *(Knopf).*

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(doctors, lawyers, journalists and accountants) and police officers (usually in plain clothes). In some communities the participants were deputized as police officers; in others they were sworn in as sheriff's deputies. In most cases, however, they simply formed somewhat drunken self-help mobs and went forth to battle armed with rifles, saplings, wagon staves and pick handles.

Not included in the collections under review are the almost legendary accounts of the 1917 lynching of Frank Little in Butte, Montana, the 1919 murder and castration of Wesley Everest in Centralia, Washington, nor the 1912 attack on Ben Reitman, Emma Goldman's lover. Reitman was kidnapped by San Diego businessmen and professionals and taken into the desert, where he was tarred and sage-brushed and forced to run a club-wielding gauntlet and kiss the flag; a stick was then jabbed into his rectum and his buttocks were branded with the letters I.W.W. by a lighted cigar. But there is more than enough homespun violence in both books, a forerunner of a long train of oppressive practices by police and their establishment sponsors, to invite some unease about the resolution of class conflict and social tension in the days ahead. □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Richard Pryor—Live on the Sunset Strip
The Long Good Friday

Having said last week that Richard Pryor should have better material than was provided him in *Some Kind of Hero*, I thought it behooved me to see what he uses when he writes for himself. In *Richard Pryor—Live on the Sunset Strip*, dressed in a bright red suit, he prowls for 90 minutes on the stage of a large hall, his only props a microphone and a tall stool holding a glass and a pitcher of water. He cracks jokes and tells anecdotes; he mimes and mimics, offers opinions on the shortcomings of society, becomes confidingly personal about his experiences, aspirations and follies. It is an impressive display of sustained communication.

A live performance such as *On the Sunset Strip* is not, perhaps, the happiest format for the screen. Partly, that is because it offers very little scope for action, and moving pictures fare best when they move. True enough, *My Dinner With Andre* coined wit from its static premise, but then Pryor did not have Louis Malle to direct and edit his film. Another problem is the original audience, which crowded into the auditorium to applaud, cheer and laugh with its host, and which does so without rest or restraint from the opening challenge to the farewell wave. As a result, filmgoers are likely to feel somewhat bullied and abashed by the participants in those live revels. There is the advantage that, being mere observers, we are able to observe the more dispassionately.

Like other professions, that of the comedian has its own hierarchy. Pryor is a jester, a high rank that can be defined as a clown who goes armed. As I said earlier, his charm is boundless, but of a sort that one would not want to presume upon. His grin is inviting but his eyes are watchful, and he responds to acclamation with a breathless, almost suppressed laugh that seems private, a little ambiguous. He can be charming, all right, but hardly playful, and at times he is not even pleasant.

He opens the present show by announcing that he will speak first "about fucking." It is a bold, if somewhat obvious, way to seize the attention of an audience. What depressed me was that Pryor, having decided on this ploy, described the activity in a way to deny its joy or even its momentary pleasure. Was he hitting us, I wondered, with what he thought we thought was the level of his sensitivity? I was troubled, too, by his use of "shit," "fuck" and their derivatives as substitutes for almost every word in the language save "and" and "but." The effect is not shocking and has not been so for years; it is merely punishing. I was acutely aware of that quiet laugh.

It is clear that Pryor is far from insensitive and has a vocabulary ample for the points he wants to make. A memorable example is his discourse on "nigger." It is a term, he says, that doesn't so much make a black man angry as it knocks the wind out of him. You're having a hot argument with a white man (sometimes with another black), when suddenly he calls you "nigger." You think, Christ! I'm having a fight with this fellow and now he makes me stop and deal with that shit. (There, for once, the word is apposite.) "I wish,"

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Pryor says plaintively, "they would stop doing it." At another point, he got to me with a skit on the illusion of bravery and the reality of danger, his brush with the Mafia providing the text. Later, he evokes the history of his narcotics addiction, staging a dialogue between himself and the drug that was a desperately comic and I thought chilling insight into the cloistral life of a junkie. To my bewilderment, the audience roared with laughter.

Perhaps those viewers were not to be blamed, for by then Pryor had worked them up to a pitch where they screamed when he so much as paused for a drink of water. Not that what he says is so irresistibly funny; at least, I can recall no cascades of incapacitating wit. It means little to commend Pryor for his sense of timing; every stand-up comic knows how to pace an act. Beyond that, he has grace and the gift of allusion. His body speaks constantly and elliptically. His miming and mimicry do not studiously imitate their targets, a procedure that is at best mechanical and often tedious. Instead, he catches the essence of what he wants to expose (with Mafiosi, it is the way they hug you), and sketches it with a few strokes so accurate and economical that the wit is in the efficiency of the surgery. If, as I suspect, he is sometimes chastising his admirers for the vulgarity of their suppositions, he pays them the compliment of assuming that they can catch intelligence on the wing.

All in all, he is a somewhat frightening, very useful man. Kings employed jesters to school them in humility. We pay at the box office for Pryor to undermine our complacency.

The Long Good Friday, written by Barry Keeffe and directed by John Mackenzie, is a British mystery thriller whose opening episodes are so deliberately confusing that it never gets the strings of its plot entirely untangled. On that score, it should perhaps be booed off the screen. But, fortunately for us and its proprietors, it is also a gangster film of contemporary exuberance and vintage flavor. Harold Shand (Bob Hoskins), a Londoner born and bred in the East End slums, must have spent his first stolen shillings on the movies of James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson, George Raft and the rest of Chicago's finest. Like Al Capone and other mobsters of the Prohibition years, Shand is boisterously patriotic. He is depressed by the dismemberment of Britain's empire and indignant that London is no longer the navel of the universe. Accordingly, he has put in train a real estate venture of unprecedented scope that, he hopes, will transform the failing heart of his city into a tourist mecca so glittering that Las Vegas will be left with nothing to boast of but its weather.

Since he wants to give this enterprise international status, Harold has invited a Yankee gangster (Eddie Constantine) to share in the capitalization and the profits. The two entrepreneurs, surrounded by henchmen and gaily dressed well-wishers, are conferring on Shand's yacht when, suddenly, his underworld empire blows up. His properties are bombed; his oldest confederate is murdered in a swimming pool. Shand, as he says himself, has maintained peace and prosperity in London's criminal society for ten long years. He is infuriated by this show of ingratitude and embarrassed in the presence of the American; he vows instant and terrible revenge.

But a chief inspector of Scotland Yard, long on Shand's payroll, can develop no leads; a usually well-informed stool pigeon has nothing to suggest, even when his thigh is delicately sliced; an eyewitness of one of the outrages is found nailed to a roof and incapable of speech. Harold sends his enforcers into the neighborhoods to haul in the satellite gangsters. These he hangs head down among the sides of beef in his slaughterhouse, but this suggestive treatment elicits nothing but pleas of ignorance. Meanwhile, the Yank has packed his bags, and the assurances of Harold's beautiful and brilliantly diplomatic mistress (Helen Mirren) that matters are well in hand do not shake his determination to catch the next plane for New York. Harold is as potent a 1920s gangster as ever Chicago or Hollywood spawned, but the 1920s did not pose the sort of challenge that did him in.

Bob Hoskins is electrifying in the part. Like a self-made captain of industry, he is naïvely confident of his own charm, enchanted by the opulence of his possessions and as boastful as a child. He is short, square and ignorant, and those he keeps around him are tall, graceful and well schooled. He is fair-minded, generous, indulgent, a dutiful son and a faithful lover. Like any healthy beast of prey, he values an easy life and a serene hunting ground. He becomes savage only when balked and kills only on provocation. It is hard not to become fond of good old Harold, but if you find yourself admiring his frank animality, recall what, in a spasm of anger, he can do with a broken bottle. □

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

'Master Harold' . . . and the boys
The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena

Among the white writers who have dealt nobly and tirelessly with apartheid in South Africa, Athol Fugard has a secure place. The protagonists of his plays (uneven in quality as these may be) are blacks or persons of mixed race portrayed with great sympathy; or they are whites who are connected to them by affection and good will and disconnected by psychic and social pressures. Such is the relationship within Fugard's latest play—a quiet, simple tale, finely wrought, and one that represents a considerable step up from the vague dramaturgy and rather preachy moral tone of his previous play, *A Lesson from Aloes*.

'Master Harold' . . . and the boys takes place in 1950 in a somewhat shabby tea room in Port Elizabeth, the setting for several Fugard plays. The date marks the time when racial matters in South Africa were beginning to settle into the extreme conditions that prevail today. It was also the time when Fugard, nearly 20, was presumably becoming fully conscious of the situation.

Willie and Sam, two black employees who are waiting for the tea room to open on a "wet and windy afternoon" before their day's work begins, are joined by Hally, the 17-year-old son of the woman who owns the place, and the three proceed to enact a moral and political drama of subtle, painful intensity. The black men are 40 or so, and it immediately becomes evident that they enjoy a close, easy relationship with the boy, who, we learn, spent a great deal of his troubled childhood in their company. They joke, banter, reminisce, work on a school assignment of Hally's; the atmosphere is warm and intimate.

"I almost wish we were still in that little room [where he would visit the men]," Hally says. "Life felt the right size in there . . . wasn't so hard to work

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up a bit of courage. It's got so bloody complicated since then." The "complications" soon start to show themselves, beginning when Hally learns from a phone call that his father is coming home from the hospital. The father is a cripple and an alcoholic, and the son can't bear the thought of his return. Stricken by anger and shame, he turns on Sam, the more articulate and complex of the two black men, engaging in what clinically would be called "displacement."

While never less than literate and well crafted, the play up to this point is slow in developing real dramatic energy, but now it finds its vigor. The long scene in which Hally repudiates his friendship with Sam becomes a confrontation of cultures, moral systems and levels of humanity. In this scene Fugard accomplishes what all playwrights wish to do: he makes his characters representative and universal; they are made to yield general truths out of their specific circumstances. The thing is beautifully done: the rhythm of the encounter rises in its painfulness and tension, subsides, rises again and reaches an almost unbearable moment in which far more is at stake than the connections between two particular human beings.

In his shame and gathering psychic blindness, the boy lashes out. When Sam urges him to remember the respect he owes his father, Hally warns, "be careful . . . you're treading on dangerous ground . . . mother's always warning me about allowing you to become too familiar. You're only a servant in here." *In here.* The place is a moral one, the location of prejudices, ancient fears. When Hally tells Sam to "start calling me Master Harold," and Sam replies, "if you make me say it once, I'll never call you anything else again," we witness the death of personal love and also of social hope. And when, after Hally goes still further in his need to humiliate the black man, and Sam says, "You've hurt yourself, Master Harold . . . you've just hurt yourself bad," we become aware of the extent of the moral injury.

'Master Harold' . . . and the boys had a limited run in its recent world premiere at the Yale Repertory Theatre, but it is certain to come to New York City. One hopes that in its reincarnation it will have the same actors who played Willie and Sam at Yale. Zakes Mokae as Sam and Danny Glover as Willie are extraordinarily good: they press for nothing, underscore no emotions, but simply ride easily along the swell of the textual wave or, in keeping with one of the plot elements, move like supremely gifted ballroom dancers. Zeljko Ivanek as Hally and Fugard in his capacity as director are distinctly inferior to them; Ivanek is much too brittle, too given to abrupt, jagged moments, and Fugard exhibits an often shaky directorial hand. Nothing fatal here, but there's room for improvement.

The Long Journey of Poppie Nongena is another stage work by and about South Africans, but while it recommends itself by its earnestness and animation, it isn't close to Fugard's play in dramatic imagination. Based on a novel by Elsa Joubert and adapted for the stage by Joubert and Sandra Kotze, the work was originally produced in Johannesburg. Eight performers, six of them black, enact the saga of a black woman's survival of the most bitter realities of South African experience. The piece is structured along story-theater lines, with several narrators, much singing and dancing, and a minimal use of props. As I say, it's earnest and heartfelt; one can't dislike it, but, for all its important political and social substance, it doesn't stay long in one's mind. □

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A	■	A	■	E	■	F	■	R	■	V	■	M	■	N
N	Y	L	O	N	■	T	I	E	D	Y	E	I	N	G
D	■	S	■	T	■	E	■	E	■	■	■	Z	■	M
■	W	■	K	I	N	D	■	S	I	N	C	E	R	E
S	H	E	■	N	■	■	■	■	■	O	■	D	E	N
Y	O	U	N	G	E	R	■	B	A	K	U	■	D	■
M	■	R	■	■	■	A	■	R	■	I	■	S	■	S
P	O	O	R	H	O	U	S	E	■	D	R	A	W	N
A	■	P	■	O	■	C	■	T	■	D	■	D	■	A
T	H	E	O	R	B	O	■	O	L	I	V	I	E	R
H	■	A	■	S	■	U	■	N	■	N	■	S	■	E
Y	A	N	K	E	E	S	■	S	I	G	H	T	E	D

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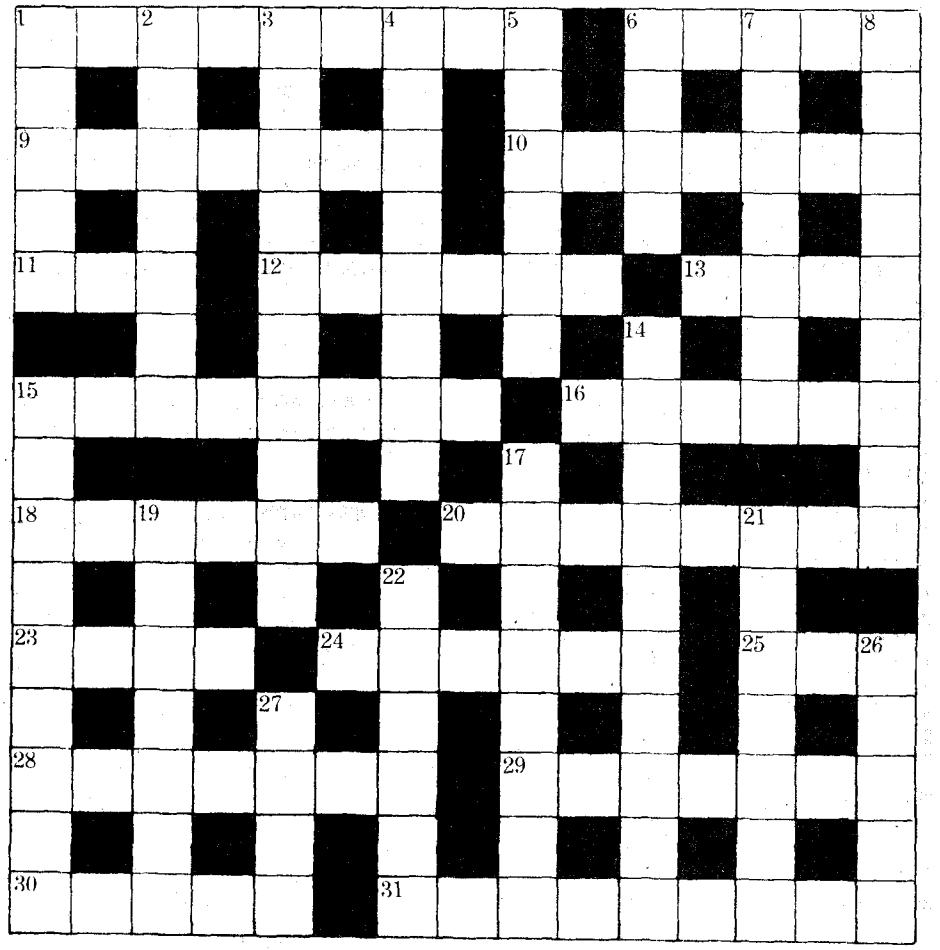
Crossword Puzzle No. 1913

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Ours does—and sometimes milk does! (5,4)
6 Perhaps not exactly at this time, but one might have to get the sound of it, with a schoolboy in the family. (3-2)
9 Road not in need of repair? Some might be putting it on! (7)
10 How New York is sometimes designated to sound like something abrasive. (7)
11, 12 and 13 You might take chances on anything material, but this—it's a definite negative! (3,2,4,4)
15 Sides are sometimes said to be, with a little work acting as a model. (8)
16 See 19 down
18 and 24 The dream of Saint Gotthard? The narrow-minded are accused of having it. (6,6)
20 Carried out and stood against the wall? (8)
23 A food that dead men eat, according to Henry Dobson. (4)
24 See 18
25 Does it imply no charge for fish? (3)
28 The last word has it wrong with a form of mental deficiency. (7)
29 Making things tough, I run back to get a gin sling. (7)
30 Gave the rest of a seed to be scattered. (5)
31 Having no exciting things for tourists to see, like Samson at one time? (9)

DOWN

1 Thistles and thickets start out this way, with a prickle. (5)
2 The part of the house that's often poetic, in poor upbringing. (7)
3 *Having seen a storm raging, did old sailors* say they saw this? (3,7)
4 The biggest prevaricator might be on the outskirts. (8)
5 *Evidently old jazz is no longer fashionable*—though many find it to their taste. (6)
6 Wild West relative of 5. (4)
7 The broken tip has a little cut around it—but you shouldn't complain so. (3-4)
8 One shouldn't 7 with anything so finished. (9)
14 No medal for this in the army! (It's not good to act like Bernstein!) (3,7)
15 They sometimes take pits this way to be anything but "in." (3,2,4)
17 Perhaps rousing a large number in going out. (8)
19 and 16 across Things like novocaine have one capable of giving service in court, but runners here might get into trouble. (7,6)
21 Tangible part of play in what might cover some 2 down. (7)
22 Walt's bloomers last heard of when a misplaced call is made. (6)
26 The capital of Denmark goes badly with certain old magistrates. (5)
27 Possibly a horse collar might have it. (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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